ORLANDO.

BY

CLEMENTINA BLACK.

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CLEMENTINA BLACK,

AUTHOR OF A "SUSSEX IDYL," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	At Sherborne-by-the-Sea	1
II.	At Sherborne-on-Land	20
III.	Congratulatory—and Otherwise	34
IV.	At a Wedding	62
V.	In Paris	99
VI.	The Beginning of Troubles	131
VII.	Foreign Intelligence	155
VIII.	Left Alone	186
IX.	New-Year's Day at Cimiès	218
X.	The New Year at Sherborne	237

ORLANDO.

CHAPTER I.

AT SHERBORNE-BY-THE-SEA.

"What shall I do? Ah, whither shall I go?
My life has slipped into a sudden night
Where no moon is, nor stars."

M. O. C.

SHERBORNE-BY-THE-SEA lay in a nook of land almost in the extreme south-eastern corner of Suffolk. As might be supposed, no railway ran to it. Ipswich, ten miles or so distant, was the nearest station. At the time when Sherborne was planned, it was proposed that the line should keep eastward to Woodbridge and Framlingham, and the founder of Sherborne looked for

much of its prosperity from the increased activity of the district. But, after much discussion and delay, the plan was changed; the line took a more inland course, running to Stowmarket, instead, and the coast-lands shared in the general depression of the abandoned neighbourhood. The trains in the days of Orlando's journey ran more slowly than they now do. It was about six o'clock when he reached Ipswich. Its clean, quiet streets—quiet to a London eye; the inhabitants consider them busy—were lighted up with the full brightness of the May sunshine.

"How far is it," he asked of a man at the station, "to Sherborne-by-the-Sea?"

The man turned upon him a glance in which Orlando read wonder that any one should inquire for the place.

"Maybe eight miles, mayhap it may be nine," he answered. His words had the peculiarity, rather of intonation and

emphasis, than of actual pronunciation which marks the Suffolk speaker.

"Is there a road?"

"Yes; there's a road to Walton, and there you turn off to the right, and you'll find it."

"Is there anywhere to sleep?"

The man looked doubtful, and cautiously replied that there might be.

To this chance Orlando trusted himself. He passed through a small part of the town, which was old and quaintly planned. The streets were narrow and winding, the bright red pavements narrower still, admitting but one passenger abreast. Many of the houses were old, with projecting upper storeys. Among them would break out, here and there, a new, white-faced dwelling of the most obtrusively modern appearance. Orlando walked between them, observing nothing of what he passed. When he came to the open country, he

felt already a slight relief. Lifting his head, and drawing a deep breath, he looked about him, thinking of the days in which his grandfather had come this way, full of hopes and schemes.

The road proved a good one. It was esteemed, in that part of the country, hilly, and passed over a succession of upland heaths. The soil was a fine, burnt-sienna coloured sand, so light and dry as to give support to the tale, current in those parts, of a man who, having sown oats before a wind, reaped his crop, indeed, from the same earth in which he had sown, but on the other side of the hedge. The horses were of the same colour as the ground, and looked as if they might have grown out of it. From the road, he looked southward upon the widening Orwell, with the sun shining down it from the west. In many places its banks were thickly wooded, and houses and gardens

were scattered along its course. As he advanced, following a lengthening shadow, he felt the fresh, salt air of the sea. To his left, lay, now, the wide estuary of the Orwell. Through the first haze of twilight he caught a glimpse of a town across the waters—Harwich.

The possible nine miles drew out, eventually, to a well-measured ten. Orlando began to feel his mental pain a little stupefied by physical fatigue, and was as thankful to be tired as a weary man for rest. It was dark when he came to Sherborne. He saw, indistinctly, many scattered houses—few of them lighted—a long flat of sand, and a dark, glistening water. He had a strange feeling of having been here before in the character of his grandfather; he almost seemed to himself like a wandering ghost, to whom all this should be familiar. Meeting a woman with a basket on her arm, he asked her what was the

nearest inn at which he could sleep. She answered, after surveying him critically, that she kept a 'public' herself, about a mile up the road, and that he could have a room if he liked. He accordingly turned back with her, and retraced his steps along the darkening road. The 'public' proved to be extremely small, but, like most of the dwellings which he had noticed, extremely clean. Its character recalled a Dutch interior, and the slow movements, heavy build, and fresh complexions of its inhabitants were in keeping with the illusion. Orlando, with his pale, dark face, long, slender limbs, and indefinable air of fine race, made a most incongruous element. Fatigue and fresh air had brought on a delicious drowsiness, through which the first sharpness of his pain seemed as distant as London.

But with the morning light—and very early that light dawned—his sorrow came

back to him in all its original bitterness. The now familiar, double pain, of loneliness, and of shrinking from companionship, returned. The blue air, the voice of the birds, mocked him with their indifference. He got up, found his hostess already busy in the kitchen, and obtained his breakfast at an earlier hour than he had ever partaken of that meal before. Then he set forth for Sherborne. The sea shone bright before him, under the rising sun; the sandy earth was brilliant in the morning glow, and the shadow which he had followed yesterday, now followed him.

Orlando had fancied, the day before, in his wanderings between Holborn and Euston Road, that no district of human habitations could be drearier. But to-day, in Sherborne-by-the-Sea, he found a yet more rooted desolation. The town lay in a bay, slightly curved like the crescent of a nearly new moon. To the north and to the

west, the ground made a slight ascent, and on the east front, sloped gradually and at length, towards the sea. The plan had been devised on a liberal scale, and after the fashion of twenty years before. On the north side of the bay was a wooden breakwater, built solidly after the style of those which may be seen frequently at Brighton, but on this eastern coast are rare. The sea is here everywhere encroaching, but the defences are of a poor and make shift sort, looking rather like the productions of boys at play than like serious engineering. At the edge of the town nearest to the sea ran a walk, which had been a little raised; grass and weeds grew on it, and it came to an abrupt termination. The houses here had been designed for shops. Some few —a baker's, two general dealers', and a chemist's—were open; the others were mostly incomplete, and there were many gaps in the line. Behind lay a wilderness

of failure: squares which had been no further planned than by the marking of a peg at each corner; crescents where the houses, few and far apart, left unsightly gaps like those of missing teeth; streets that led nowhere, and in which the pavement came to a sudden end. Not more than one house in four was finished. In some, the roofs were wanting, and the joists of the floor, seen through the openings of the doors and windows, were blackened and greenish with time and damp. The party walls, also, were green, and stained with wet. Birds had built in the put-log-holes, and between the angles of the rafters. The building was mostly of cemented brick. The finished houses had pretentious columns on each side of their doors, and broad steps leading up to them; but the cement was falling away, in flakes, from the pillars, so that the brick core showed through, and grass was growing in

the interstices of the steps. The few that were inhabited held tenants of a far lower class than those for whom they had been originally designed. Between two dwellings, which any agent would have advertised as 'desirable mansions,' grew a patch of cabbages. In many places, foundations had been dug out, upon which nothing had been founded. They remained as pits, overgrown with long, straggling grass. Broken bricks and slates, piles of mortar hard as rock, battered kettles, and old boots, lay among the weeds. Here was a tub, imbedded almost to its mouth, and retaining still a little pool of greenish, ill-smelling water, thickened whitely from its substratum of mortar. There were strange unevennesses in the ground, formed no doubt by the tracks for barrows, or by hardened mortar which had become incorporated into the soil.

At the north corner lay a little church,

old and built of stone. It was poor, and many of its windows were blocked up. Its churchyard surrounded it; and Orlando, as he looked into it, could not but think how much more thickly peopled it was than the town. He wandered over every nook and corner, and at last turned away from it all, and came down, feeling sick at heart, to the sea. The brilliancy of the early morning had changed to a warm, dull greyness. Lights and shadows melted into a dim uniformity of tint. The sea lay tranquil under a sky that was neither clear nor cloudy. Two boats were drawn up on the sandy beach, another was visible far out on the bay. An old man was lounging on the shore with a pipe in his mouth; and a little higher up, a young woman, of an oddly sailor-like appearance, was spreading clothes to dry in the sun. Orlando stood, for a little while, looking out to sea; an over-

whelming weight of hopelessness lay upon him. At some stage or other of our progress through the world, we come to realize for the first time, our own bitter inability to affect its course. The wishes that are life of our life are powerless as winds upon a rock. The world goes on its way, indifferent, as we to our neighbour's dreams. This terrible sense of the deaf procession of fate had come to Orlando. Here was the desolate wreck of his grandfather's ambition. His own had led him to no better end. Life seemed to him like the leaf on a tree, which falls at the will of the wind, and is forgotten. He laid himself down on the sand under the breakwater, and wished that his life might come to an end.

He remembered how, eight months ago, he had lain under the trees at Willingshurst, amid meditations of how different a sort.

"That day—oh that day!" he murmured to himself, repeating Elizabeth's words.

Then, with all the acute self-torture which only memory can inflict, he recalled every time of their meeting, all her looks and words, all his own vain, wasted hopes. Hour after hour he lay; the grey skies grew to a leaden, noonday heat; the heat sank slowly to a pale afternoon; the afternoon thickened towards a misty evening. Still no relief came to him. Once in the day he sat up, bent his arms and face against his knees, and tried to pray. But the hard laws of the universe seemed to stand before him like a blank wall. He dropped himself back upon the sand, and lay motionless as before. The evening drew on, and the mists thickened. Through the mist came the recurring wash of the slow waves, breaking on the long, low shore. Orlando had slipped unawares into sleep, and started, suddenly

awake. Leaning his hand upon the ground, he raised himself, and looked about. Inland, the clouds had broken a little. A blurred glare of red showed the sinking sun, and an ever fainter line of mist spread from it, northward, over the grey haze of the sea. The stillness that belongs to sunset had full dominion. The town lay indistinct, an uneven line of blackness against the sky. Orlando turned his face from it to the redder light of the sun, sinking quicker and quicker to its disappearance, and spreading, at each incalculably fine division of its descent, a wider glow. Suddenly, recalled by who knows what link of sunset recollection, the idea of his father rose up distinct before his mind, and with it the thought of his father's grief if he were dead. How selfish, petty, and unworthy did he seem to himself! To be sitting here—here, on the waste shore which had made the burden of his father's life—

wrapped up in his own small solitude of pain, forgetful of all the love and duty, the simple, straightforward path of life which he had seen so clearly before him! His heart melted within him. He put his hands before his face, and in the darkness called up the image of his home. Oh, he would go back. His home wanted him; his place was empty. He could never know again the pleasure of a strong wish to be fulfilled for himself, but there was still left the power of fulfilling those which others had founded upon him.

"They shall never know," he murmured to himself.

The murmur was a partial expression of the deep, inner resolve that his sorrow should in no way make him fail towards others. Drawing a deep breath, he uncovered his face, and looked about him. The sun was gone. A thin darkness confused the edges of sea and land. At the

northern end of the town twinkled a single light. He rose, sighing, and went up the beach.

On the parade, so-called, he paused, a little doubtful how to find the Ipswich road. For he was resolved to go back to-night to Ipswich, and to-morrow, as early as might be, to go home. He saw the figure of a tall woman, coming slowly along the parade. She was dressed in black, and seemed to be elderly. Of her he asked his way.

She gave him the direction, speaking in an accent unfamiliar to him, but certainly not that of Suffolk.

"Thank you. And shall I pass anywhere where I can get something to eat?"

"Ye'll see the Sherborne Arms—a very quiet house, and kept by decent folk."

He thanked her again, and went on his way. The Sherborne Arms! How strange a thrill the name sent through

him! The thought followed, quick as a lightning flash, that now there never would be a son of his to inherit the name or the arms. And there again lay another grief for his father. All the more must he go home and make his father's happiness his one aim, henceforth.

The Sherborne Arms was an old house which had been turned into an inn, and received its present name in the first flush of hope that had illumined Batteringbury Bay rather more than five and twenty years before.

Going in, he asked whether he could have some cold meat.

No cold meat; they could cook a chop.

He had not time to wait for that. Perhaps they could give him some bread and cheese?

Yes; that they could.

He was shown into a little parlour. The first thing which met his eyes was

an engraving, hung above the fireplace, of the familiar portrait of his grandfather.

"You are looking at that portrait, sir," said the innkeeper, who had ushered him in. "Ah, a very unfortunate gentleman he was, sir — most unfortunate indeed. That was Mr. Sherborne, sir, that the place is named after."

Orlando leaned his elbows on the mantelshelf, and gazed at the engraving. The worn look on his face brought out a likeness which might have struck the dullest. But the landlord, although the original of the portrait had been well known to him, failed to perceive it. His notion of Mr. Sherborne was so indissolubly connected with a high, white neckcloth, that the dark tie and 'improved Milton' collar of Orlando formed an altogether insuperable barrier to recognition. Bread, cheese, and beer were brought, and Orlando fell upon them with a hunger

that spoke well for the tonic qualities of Sherborne air.

Then, much refreshed, but still looking forward with satisfaction to the idea of a meat supper at Ipswich, he set out. But the ten minutes which he had spent in the inn had furnished its occupants with a topic of conversation for the next three days, so rare was the advent of a stranger in Sherborne-by-the-Sea, and so sure were the women of the house that some romantic tale lay at the root of his paleness and his melancholy looks.

He did his return ten miles at a good pace, rejoicing in the hope that he might tire himself out, and win a night of sleep. But sleep will no more be controlled by human wishes than any other of the world's powers, and his walk brought no other gain than the reflection that it had abridged the night by an hour or two.

CHAPTER II.

AT SHERBORNE-ON-LAND.

"My constant thought makes manifest
I have not what I love the best,
But I must thank God for the rest."

Jean Ingelow.

ORLANDO went back to London by the earliest train next day, and there despatching all necessary preparations with a headlong speed, which was quite uncalled for, but in which he found a kind of satisfaction, he betook himself to another station, and departed for Sherborne-on-Land, where, in consequence of this hot haste, he arrived soon after twelve o'clock. All this time he had had a feeling that he was flying from his pain. But now, when he

got out of the train at Sherborne, it came quietly to his side again, inevitable as his shadow in the sunshine. He looked round. The well-known place had become strange. He seemed to see it to-day for the first time. With what different eyes had he looked upon all this, the last time that he had stood here!

He left his portmanteau, saying that it should be sent for, and walked away briskly. He felt as if what he had undergone must be written on his face, for every one's reading. He had summoned up a smile, and forced an easy tone in speaking to these men who knew him and his affairs, and he walked away with a quick step. But his sore heart represented them as looking after him, nevertheless, with a grin of comprehension. Once out of sight, the quick step lagged, the smile fell suddenly off, and the erect bearing drooped. He turned off from the road

and went home by a byeway through the fields. As he walked, the words of the prodigal son went with him, repeating themselves and floating on the surface of his mind. He went into the house from the back, stepping over the wall of the kitchen garden, and passing under the arch of the old priory.

A noonday stillness had possession of the house. No one was to be seen. From some kitchen, near at hand, he heard the voices of two of the servants; as he passed, one laughed, and then silence came again. The whole place seemed desolate, empty. He looked into the morning room. The long Venetian blinds were drawn down. The room was full of a thin twilight—a veiled sunniness. He advanced to the library; his father would be there. Opening the door gently, he had before him the scene which he knew so well—the background of books; in the foreground

the writing-table and his father's figure. Mr. Sherborne lifted to his son's face the familiar gaze, inquiring, uncertain, short-sighted.

"Well, father," said Orlando.

He had meant to speak bravely, but there was a worn and weary note in his voice.

The father stood up, hastily, half alarmed.

"Orlando! My dear boy, is anything the matter?"

"No, father; only I thought I might as well come home."

He laid his hat, wearily, on the table. They sat down, side by side. Mr. Sherborne, now that they were at close quarters, could distinguish how pale and hopeless Orlando's face was looking. It even seemed as if he had grown thinner in these few weeks. His father said nothing, but he laid his hand upon one of his son's. Orlando looked up. He

had not meant to relate his grief, but, meeting his father's mild, anxious gaze, he felt that some explanation would have to be made.

"Something has happened to you, Orlando."

"Yes; I'll tell you all about it in a minute."

"Is it"—he hardly knew how to put his question—"anything about money?"

"No," Orlando answered, languidly. He began to understand what kind of fears were in his father's mind, and added, hastily, "Oh no." Lifting his face, he said, "Miss Glendinning——"

It was enough. In the breast of Mr. Sherborne, that gentlest of men, who dwelt in charity with all his neighbours, rose a sudden flame of indignation against the girl who had done this to Orlando. He could say nothing—not a word; but the pressure of his hand was eloquent.

"I did not mean to tell you—not now, at any rate; but I could not go on, and you not knowing. It is not *her* fault."

The tone with which his voice dwelt upon the words went to his father's heart like a stab.

"But are you so sure?" he said, hesitatingly, after a moment. "You have seen each other so little. Might not she change her mind?"

"She was engaged to another man—engaged before I ever saw her. Don't ask me about it. I can't speak of it. It's all over."

The father could find no consoling words of answer. His other hand came to join itself to the first, his son's between them. Orlando's eyes followed, listlessly. His father's hand lay uppermost, worn, wrinkled, with delicately moulded fingers, and with every bone and vein showing its course distinctly through the skin. Its touch was

chill. Orlando's own, so like it in its shape, was warm and firm, the outside sunburnt, the palm hardened by rowing. The contrast, as he looked down, stirred a sudden wave of mingled tenderness and shame. Had he not resolved that his father's comfort should be the first thing with him, henceforth ?

"Well," he said, drawing a long breath, "it is no use to say any more about it. I am not going to give way to despair. I mean to stay here and try to do some good in the place where I belong."

He spoke almost cheerfully, but a sigh caught him before he was aware, and betrayed the undercurrent which had brought it. He turned his course into shallower waters.

"Where's Millie ?" he asked, lightly. But with Millie's name came the remembrance where and how he had spoken of her last.

"She is spending the day at Ayling Court. They have a croquet-party and an early dance. It is Miss Ayling's birthday."

"How is Millie? Any brighter?"

"I hardly know. She seems so changeable. I don't quite understand Millie, Orlando."

"I must try and cheer her up," said Orlando, smiling a little sadly, as he thought of the price at which he had bought the knowledge which was to comfort Millie.

A few days later, the brother and sister were together in the garden. Orlando was smoking, Millie walking leisurely by him. He had been watching, all these days, for an opportunity of introducing Gilbert's name. The present moment seemed surely most suitable, but he smoked on, meditatively, without finding an appropriate form of opening. While

he still meditated, Millie began, as one to whom a chance remembrance occurs.

"Oh, Orlando, now that you have seen a good deal of Elizabeth and her cousin, what do you think about them?"

"Why, a great many things."

"Don't be so foolish. Do you think, if you will have it so very plainly, that they are in love with one another?"

"No; I am sure that they are not."

"No? What makes you say so?"

"I know, as a fact, that she is engaged to another man."

"Oh—who?"

"I don't know, perhaps, that I ought to say anything about it yet. Nobody you know."

"Tell me this: is he good enough for her?"

"I don't know."

"But you are sure it is true?'

"Oh yes," said Orlando.

The cigar between his lips might perhaps account for his laconic answers. Now, however, he threw it away, and moving a step forward, paused, so that they stood face to face.

"And now, Millie, why is this question of so much interest to you?"

She looked down, blushing, with a wavering smile stirring the corners of her mouth. He took her reluctant hand, and earnestly, yet not without a smile on his face too, persisted.

"Why, Millie?"

She caught away her hand, and looking him defiantly in the face, asked, "What has that to do with you?" The words came a little tremulously, and sounded as if they rather tried to be angry than were.

"Then it's true; you do care about him," said Orlando, slowly.

Millie looked up, for a moment, as if she were about to make an angry defence.

But finding in Orlando's face nothing which demanded opposition, she changed her mind. The sympathetic inquiry of his eyes stirred an impulse of confidence. Sighing out, "Oh, Orlando!" she made a step towards him, and hid her face, sobbing, against her brother's shoulder.

"Poor old Millie!" said Orlando, drawing his arm round her very tenderly, and trying hard to conceal the profound astonishment with which, in spite of his own love experiences, it filled him to see his sister weeping in this way for the sake of Gilbert Oakes.

"It's nothing. I'm silly, I know; but I can't help it."

"But, you know," said Orlando, when her tears were abating a little, "I don't really see that you have much cause to cry."

"What do you mean?" asked Millie, with a gasp.

Orlando found it not quite easy to give an answer which should satisfy both his sister and his own conscience. For, certainly, it was not for him to tell Gilbert's story, even if he had had it on Gilbert's own authority. And as to telling Millie the manner in which he became possessed of it, that was still more impossible. He said, therefore, rather lamely—

"Why, you see, I haven't any right to tell Oakes's secrets, have I?"

"Did he say anything to you?" she asked, again looking up with a blush, that rose to her temples and gave a quite new radiance to her fair face.

"No, Millie; oh no. Is it likely?"

They were walking on again now, Orlando's arm still round Millie's shoulders.

"But I thought—I mean, I fancied—what should make him so awfully friendly to me, if it wasn't for somebody else's sake?"

It must be acknowledged that Orlando was lamentably incapable of managing even an innocent deception. Millie was perfectly certain that he had further grounds, and perhaps was almost as much encouraged as if she had known them in detail.

"He certainly was awfully friendly."

"And you got on well together?"

"Regularly chummed."

Millie softly smiled.

"I have been thinking," pursued Orlando, "that we might ask him down. From something he once said, I believe he would be glad enough to come. I did not think of it at the time, but when the idea had been put into my head—I mean afterwards—I saw how it was."

"And who," asked Millie, quickly, "put it into your head?" For she still suspected that Gilbert had at least dropped a hint.

"Oh, could I not originate such an idea?"

"No," she returned, rather sharply. "You would never dream of anybody falling in love with *me*, because you would not do it yourself."

Orlando was totally unable to parry this thrust, and she proceeded.

"It must have been Elizabeth who thought so."

He made no answer.

"Well, Orlando?"

"I don't admit that anybody thought so, except me. But I do think so. And if it is so, why, I can only say, I am very glad of it."

He looked down towards her, smiling.

"And so am I," said Millie, almost under her breath.

CHAPTER III.

CONGRATULATORY—AND OTHERWISE.

"Will the love that you're so rich in
Make a fire in the kitchen?
Or the little god of love turn the spit, spit, spit?"

Miss Glendinning was sitting with Captain Grove, in her own drawing-room, on the afternoon on which Orlando journeyed to Ipswich. She was a little paler than usual, and a little more grave.

"Edward," said she, "I want you to do something for me. I have never asked you to alter your plans in any way before, but now I must."

Captain Grove kept the same attentive smile on his face, and even threw a little eager inquiry into his eyes. But within

himself he thought, "Now she is beginning. She is just like all other women, after all."

"I *must* have our engagement known, Edward, *please*. I have undergone I can't tell you how much self-reproach about it." A rose-leaf pink crept into her cheeks, and the eyes that looked up to him were wet.

"What! for Lawrence O'Brien's sake? I think that was rather superfluous."

"Do you?" said Elizabeth.

"You must not take his words to mean much. Words come so easily to an Irishman."

Elizabeth was silent, and he, though he so much desired a clear reply, dared not ask for it. If she had distinctly refused Lawrence, he would willingly declare their engagement to all the world. But he must know how the case stood. She, on her side, was quite resolved to keep the promise

which she had voluntarily made to Orlando of preserving his secret.

"Come, Lizzie, is that it?"

"Yes, partly. And, besides, I hate the falseness of the position. I am pretending to be something that I am not. It degrades me in my own eyes—it does, indeed."

"What! to be engaged to me?"

"No, no!" Her tone was a sweet apology. "You did not think I meant that. But, indeed, Edward, I do insist."

"You needn't have done that." And, as her eyes asked for explanation, "You might have left me the pleasure of yielding."

Elizabeth drew a long breath of relief, and as his smile sought one in answer, faintly smiled.

"But you must give me two days to bring my uncle up. If I don't hear by that time, I'll go down to him. Don't

you suppose that I am a little impatient, too? I don't believe it ever occurred to you that it was more painful to me than to you to have a lot of men always hanging about you, and watching you, and discussing the probability of your marrying this, that, and the other man."

A warm red flushed her cheeks for a moment. Of course she knew, in theory, that men did, from time to time, discuss such possibilities in regard to herself; but to have the knowledge thus directly set before her brought a most displeasing shock. But after the first instant of recoil, her mind turned to the new view of her lover's position. They were seldom long together without the arousing in her mind of something like self-reproach. Her attitude towards him was one of continual mental apology. A constant, inward shame which she hardly recognized, but none the less distinctly felt, warned her perpetually

that she brought less affection to her share of the contract than he to his. And now again she told herself that she had been seeing, as usual, only such hardships as touched herself, forgetful that their position held annoyances for him too.

"Do you know," she said, repentantly, "I never thought of that. I don't know how it is—I am afraid I must be naturally very cold-hearted—I can't at all get used to the idea of your caring so much for me. I haven't really made you uncomfortable by anything that I have done, have I?"

"You delicious innocence, no. If I ever feel an insane jealousy for a moment, I know that in very fact I have you all to myself, and I am delighted to think how little use it is for the others all to flutter about you."

The subtle interweaving of truth and falsehood, and unconscious falsehood, in this speech would have been difficult to unravel even by a far more experienced

and suspicious listener. Elizabeth accepted, though she could not understand all of it: but she resented a little the appellation of 'delicious innocence.' Indeed, the young woman has yet to be discovered who does altogether relish the application to herself as a general epithet of the term 'innocent.' Not that she desired to be thought noxious, but that the common notion of innocence is so closely associated with that of ignorance that the first adjective has come to be little better than a polite synonym for the second.

Elizabeth let a moment pass in silence, and then looking up, with a brighter face than she had yet shown, issued a mild command that he should stay to dinner, since she and her father were alone; for it need hardly be said that the engagement had not continued all these months unknown to and unsanctioned by Major Glendinning. Captain Grove yielded a

smiling obedience. For though, perhaps, he derived the most acute gratification from his engagement at the times when he saw Elizabeth surrounded by men who admired her, and would have envied him, he had by no means exhausted the charm of her private submissiveness, and found himself much more earnestly in love with her, now, than when he had first won her consent. This result seemed to him both very remarkable and very praiseworthy; he began to think, with Richard, that he must have been mistaken all this time; and that the virtue of constancy had only lain dormant in his nature till the right woman should appear to call it forth.

On leaving Burlington Street, that evening, he sought out Lawrence O'Brien, whom he found entertaining a particularly hilarious party of friends, the greater number being military and Irish. To these Captain Grove was a welcome addition, as,

indeed, he was in almost all companies. Not until the last guest had departed did he show any trace of seriousness. Then, careful observation having convinced him that O'Brien, though not completely sober, was still in a condition to comprehend his disclosure, and, perhaps, to receive it more kindly than in a less excited moment, he began.

"You remember meeting me, one day, last autumn in Piccadilly, just before you went to Sydenham's?"

Lawrence, after a moment's consideration, remembered it very well, and evinced his recollection by throwing himself back in an armchair and drawing a melodramatically deep sigh.

Captain Grove, from the edge of the table on which he was sitting, looked down with perfect external gravity, and continued. "Now, of course, I have never uttered a syllable to anybody of what you said to me that day."

The gravity deepened on his face as he spoke. The necessity of the words, now that it had come upon him, was hateful, and he hated O'Brien for being its cause.

Lawrence murmured indistinct gratefulness.

"But now I must tell you something in my turn."

O'Brien nodded several times, and Captain Grove dropped a keen glance upon him, a little doubtful, after all, whether his condition was suitable for the reception of a rather delicate communication.

"The fact is, then," said he, "that you could not have chosen a better confidant as far as you were concerned, nor a worse one so far as I was."

"How d'ye mean?" asked Lawrence.

"I mean this. I intended then, and had done for months, to marry Miss Glendinning, if she would have me."

"What?" cried Lawrence, sitting sud-

denly upright, and exchanging a rather vacant smile for a look of perfectly sober indignation.

"Now, don't be hasty; hear me out. I say that was my intention. But do you think, knowing what I did, that I could go and forestall you? How could I have looked either you or her in the face, if I had?"

And, as he said this, Captain Grove really felt a certain degree of emotion, which was quite pleasant to himself, and which was not at all affected by its complete fictitiousness. For to him another man's thought of him was all the same as truth, and, the first plunge over, the distastefulness of the falsehood began to be overpowered by the pleasure of seeing it succeed.

Lawrence looked at him with an angry eagerness still brightening his very blue eyes.

"Look here, Lawrence; I have waited now ever since September, to give you your chance. Of course I know you are a better match than I am—younger and better off, and all the rest of it—but I give you warning; I can't wait any longer. No, hang it, I can't."

And rising from the table, he took a stride or two about the room, keeping a manly restraint upon the emotion which his words had indicated, and which for the time was partly real to him, as an actor's might be.

Lawrence sprang up.

"You did, Grove! You are a good fellow—upon my soul, you are. But it's all up with me, old man; she won't have anything to say to me. Well, if it's you, I don't care so much. I thought it was that confounded cousin."

And he shook hands most energetically with his successful rival, whom only the

instinct of self-preservation could restrain from an outburst of laughter. Shame and relieved pleasure had given place to a real exhilaration of triumph. He did, however, exercise so much self-control as to defer that manifestation until he was at home in his lodging. Arrived there, he laughed quietly many times, and then sat down to write to the uncle whom he had used so often as a stalking-horse in his dealings with Elizabeth. And having completed a simple-seeming letter of excessive craftiness, he betook himself to bed, towards two o'clock, with a pleasing consciousness of having well employed his day.

Three days later, Elizabeth got a note, telling her that Sir Edward Grove had come to London, and that his nephew would bring him to Burlington Street that afternoon. The visit was duly made, and Miss Glendinning's appearance and manner were not without their effect upon

her lover's wealthiest relation. An amiable idiosyncrasy of temper, however, restrained him from showing any cordiality which might gratify his watchful nephew, and Captain Grove, to whom Elizabeth's charm lay as much in other people's estimation of her as in his own, thought that she had seldom been so unattractive. He took his leave with considerable gloom, anticipating no very pleasant interview. For Sir Edward Grove, having a sufficient income to allow himself that luxury, was as persistently stinging in his speech as his nephew was compliant.

They walked home in silence, or rather in the mere interchange of trivial remarks upon passing persons and things seen. Captain Grove would not ask his uncle's opinion, point-blank. His uncle, on his side, delighted to keep him in suspense. The nephew was also quite aware of the beneficial influence exerted by a good

dinner upon the temper of an elderly gentleman. But at last, when the good dinner had been partaken of, apparently with great approval, and yet no word came of Elizabeth, he could restrain his impatience no longer, and asked, in the easiest tone which he could assume, "And what was your opinion of Miss Glendinning?"

"I think Miss Glendinning a very charming young woman," Sir Edward answered.

His nephew hardly knew whether to augur well from so unexpectedly pleasing a reply, or whether rather to expect the more decisive a blow to his hopes, when they should have been raised by such a prelude.

"An *objet de luxe*," he went on, "in which a rich man could not do better than invest. A woman of that kind would be a most suitable wife for a man in my position, if I were fool enough to marry."

"But not for a man in mine?" said the nephew with a smile, which was not exactly of enjoyment.

"The question in all such cases is, what has she? Jack Glendinning never had a penny, and I always understood that Lady Elizabeth's fortune was chiefly in her face. She took it to a bad enough market. I can't think how a woman with a natural monopoly like beauty can be such a fool as to waste her chance. If I had been in Lady Elizabeth's place, I would not have stopped short of an earldom, I know that. But her father was an inconsiderate sort of man, and these imprudences run in families. I have often observed it. And nothing is so certain to bring a family down to nothing at all."

This was pleasant for Captain Grove, but he carried his smile bravely.

"Don't you think," he asked, "that a wife like Miss Glendinning might be a help to a man in his career?"

"Yes, if he had one. For a rising member, now, if he had something of his own, it might not be so unwise. But, you know, you can't set a diamond in brass: a woman of that kind requires an establishment to correspond, and if she has not the means herself, she ought to look for it in a husband."

"But, surely, if she is satisfied——" Captain Grove began.

"My dear boy, that merely shows she is a fool. It is the family weakness coming out. To my mind it is an indication that she will never be much help as a wife. There are cases, of course, in which a seemingly imprudent match is really a good speculation—when there is marked talent, for instance, which is sure to rise. A woman who does that shows brains. But that is not your case, you know, Ned."

"Well, uncle, it is done now. I am sorry you don't think better of it."

"No, Ned, on the contrary; it is not done. I can assure you I would not waste words on you, if it were. The truth is, and there is no use in disguising it, that you have just fallen in love with a pretty face, like any schoolboy; and there is not sense enough between the pair of you to sacrifice your fancy to your advantage."

This description of his conduct was as unpleasant to Captain Grove as it was to Elizabeth to be called deliciously innocent. He longed that the subject might be dropped, but at the same time he knew that to hint such a wish would be to keep his uncle lecturing all the evening upon imprudent marriages.

"But you have not told me what she has. Is it altogether nothing? Of course her father's pay dies with him; and there is no doubt he spends it all, and probably more. There's no man in London wears better coats and hats, or more of them."

"She has a house in Portland Place, next to Lady Ellen's—the Tenbys live in it—and something of her mother's besides."

"Enough to pay her dressmaker. And as to you, you'll have only your salary, which is nothing—absolutely nothing. Of course it is a very gratifying thing to be accepted by a pretty girl like that, but I call it taking a confounded advantage of her ignorance to marry her. If she had a mother she would not be allowed to do it."

"She has got plenty of aunts."

"Yes, and see what they say when they hear it. I have a great mind to go and talk it over with Lady Ellen myself, if it weren't that she is so abominably deaf. She never hears a word that she doesn't want to hear, and the sharpness has all gone out of her ears into her tongue. Upon my word, Ned, you are a bold man to think of marrying her niece. Honestly, did you

ever reflect that you would be nephew-in-law to Lady Ellen Darling?"

Captain Grove had it upon his tongue to answer that a long course of avuncular criticism had hardened him to a point at which such terrors ceased to wound. He abstained, however, partly from prudence, partly because he would not please his uncle by a counter-blow which should acknowledge the smart of his. He made, therefore, no reply, and Sir Edward rose smilingly and announced that he was going to the opera. Captain Grove was left more dissatisfied with his own wisdom than he had ever found himself before, and avenged his uneasiness on its involuntary cause by neither visiting nor writing to Elizabeth for three days. On the third, he met O'Brien, who, almost with tears in his eyes, wished him happiness; and on the fourth he appeared in Burlington Street, and explained, though a little coldly, that business and his uncle had engrossed him.

The interval was filled up, for Elizabeth, by the congratulations of her friends and acquaintances. Among them came those of Gilbert, for which she had looked rather eagerly, and of Lawrence O'Brien, for which she had not looked at all.

Gilbert expressed a good deal of surprise, and a little dissatisfaction. He began by asking if the news which Lady Ellen had just given to him was true.

Elizabeth assured him that it was.

"Well," he said slowly, looking at her a little anxiously, "I dare say you know him better than I do; but he is not the sort of man I should have fancied you marrying."

"Isn't he? Why not?"

"Oh, I don't know; he seems to be a little cold-blooded, you know. I suppose you will be offended with me for saying so, though you did ask me."

"Indeed I shall not. It would take a

good deal to offend me from you, Gilbert. I am sorry you should think so of Edward —of course I am—but I know you will change your mind when you come to know him better. He does not wear his heart upon his sleeve, and I like him the better for it."

"Yes, dear, of course; and if he had been unable to keep a thought to himself, you would have liked him the better for his charming openness. The real ground of quarrel is this, Lizzie: I don't think he is quite the man to know what a treasure he has got. I can't fancy him as desperately in love as your lover ought to be before I would allow him a whisper of hope."

"Oh, if that's all——" said Elizabeth, drawing a long breath, with a combination of smile and blush that was altogether radiant. Then, growing demure again, "I don't think you have much ground for complaint in that respect."

She looked up, half laughing, but her cousin's face was still grave.

"To tell the truth, Gilbert, with the deepest sincerity, he loves me so much that I am always unhappy with the thought that I can't love him enough in return."

"Oh, Lizzie, Lizzie! if you only knew how much too good a woman's love is for any of us! Upon my word, Hamlet wasn't far wrong when he told Ophelia to go to a nunnery."

"You would not send Millie, though," said Elizabeth, partly amused, partly indignant, and with a trembling in her voice of tears not far off.

"No, I would not; I could not. But in very truth, Liz, I am half afraid of winning her, for fear I should make her as unhappy as so many men do make their wives. I pray Heaven I may be killed some way sooner than that."

"My dear Gilbert!" said Elizabeth, much

moved. She slipped her hand into his and went on. "That would be the only way you could make her unhappy. As long as a woman is loved like that, she doesn't care for anything else. And as to deserving—well, I suppose none of us can deserve the best kind of love; it is not a question of deserving. Only," with a little laugh, "I know I wish that I had love enough to give Edward more than he deserves."

"If there's an overplus on either side," said Gilbert, "it is very well it should be on his. The best wish I can wish you is that it may be so always."

"The *best wish*, Gilbert?"

"Yes, dear. Yours is sure to grow if he is worthy; and that his should keep on increasing in the same proportion is surely the best wish I can make for you both. And now, Liz, admire my heroism. I have been talking all this time of your affairs (with my heart in them, let me say),

and what do you think I have in my pocket?"

"Oh, what?"

He dropped into her lap a letter. It was a short but very cordial invitation to go to Sherborne, and Orlando's name was at the end. As Elizabeth read it, the words formed themselves into Orlando's voice; the very imagination of that disturbed the even beating of her heart, and brought a troubled colour to her face.

"I am glad; it is very nice of him," she said softly, as she gave back the letter.

"If I had gone about looking for a brother-in-law," said Gilbert, "I don't think I could have found one to suit me better than Sherborne."

"No, I don't think that you could."

"You like him, too, don't you?"

"Very much indeed; and so does Aunt Ellen. I think, in a few years' time, he may make a very noble man." She sighed.

"I am glad that you are going to be with him."

"Why?" asked Gilbert, opening his eyes.

"I think you will be a good companion for him," she answered, in a quiet and measured voice.

With that, Orlando fell out of the conversation, which turned towards Gilbert's own affairs.

On the next of Lady Ellen's Tuesday evenings, Elizabeth saw that Lawrence O'Brien was present. She thought he would have done better not to come, and fully expected that, after the needful word or two of greeting, he would speak to her no more. But at a moment when she was unoccupied she found him near her. He spoke, for the first moment, of indifferent things; then, dropping his voice a little, and with his irresistible smile softened by his eyes into something rather pathetic, fell into another key.

"Miss Glendinning, will you allow me to say that I congratulate you very heartily upon the news which every one is telling me about you?"

Elizabeth looked up quickly. This, from him, touched as well as surprised her.

"I don't think there is a man in London whom I think more highly of than I do of Grove. He has behaved to me like a hero,"—or, as Lawrence pronounced it, becoming more than usually Irish in his emotion, a *haro*. "I'll never forget it of him."

"Thank you—thank you very much," said Elizabeth, warmly. "It makes me very happy to hear you say so." And from that day O'Brien was exalted several steps in her esteem.

She related the circumstance to Captain Grove, who smiled complacently.

"Now, don't you think that you were

a little hard on him?" she asked. "You see how differently he thinks of you."

"Yes," said Captain Grove, slowly, as who should say, "The cases are not parallel."

Elizabeth laughed, and told him he was conceited, though a full agreement with his opinion was shining all the time in her eyes.

Captain Grove, ever so slightly lifting his eyebrows, looked at her with a momentary cold displeasure. Then in his usual, even tone he replied, "Winning you is enough to make a man conceited."

Elizabeth, who did not yet know that true love makes humble, was pleased; but an instinctive knowledge, whose existence she would vehemently have denied, bade her change the subject. She began, in these days, to find that even an acknowledged and sanctioned love was not free from its cares. For Captain Grove, now

that that which he had set his heart on was avowedly his own, began for the first time to suspect that it was hardly worth the winning. With him, as with all ungenerous men,

> 'The lovely toy, so fiercely sought,
> Had lost its charm by being caught.'

His uncle, like a moral Naboth at his gate, poisoned his happiness. He could not rejoice in his triumph while he knew that one man viewed it with sarcastic eyes. He began to appear to himself in the light of a man who had made generous sacrifices for love, and to trouble Elizabeth's clear mind with hints of himself in that aspect.

And thus time pursued its course, bringing joy and pain, and abatement of pain and death; and the strands of life, which were twisted together, unawares, lengthened a little, and turned this way and that, figuring a pattern which they foresaw not.

CHAPTER IV.

AT A WEDDING.

"*Orlando.* They shall be married to-morrow"; and I will bid the duke to the nuptial. But, O, how bitter a thing it is to look into happiness through another man's eyes! By so much the more shall I to-morrow be at the height of heart-heaviness, by how much I shall think my brother happy, in having what he wishes for."—*As You Like It.*

THERE was a period in which the characters of a play or a novel not unfrequently changed their dispositions in the last act or the last chapter with as much ease and completeness as their costumes. It may readily be seen how much such a transformation assisted in bringing about a swift and happy termination. Those critics, however, who hold that fiction should mirror nature, have followed the lead of Fielding

and Richardson in condemning such a treatment, and their persistent censure has slowly eliminated it from the modern novel. On the stage, indeed, that stronghold of tradition, whose literature is always of the most conservative and conventional, the practice lingers still. But, in regard to novels, it is so completely dead that the time seems to have come for pointing out its virtues, and for suggesting that the opposite extreme, which is so very much alive among us, is not without faults. The personages of modern fiction have often become so very stable of mind that their natures are not at all modified by the deeply moving experiences which they undergo. We leave them on the last page just as virtuous or villainous, and no more so, than on the first. But does this stability mirror our own observation of life? Do we find in our friend of thirty the friend whom we made at twenty—or should we

be satisfied if we did? And can we not often, either in our own life or in those which have stood near us, point out a moment which seems to have altered a whole nature? Love, or grief, or a sudden temptation, touches us, and we are changed.

At Sherborne, a change had come thus both to Orlando and to Millie. To the one it had come on the wings of a great pain, to the other, of a great joy. Millie had been all her life the victim of a self-tormenting temper. An uneasy craving for more affection, a jealous shyness of lavishing her own, continual suspicion that she was unlovable, and hot rebellion against the notion that forbearance was given her in the place of love, had made her an uncomfortable companion even to chance acquaintances, yet more so to those who were nearer to her, and most of all uncomfortable to herself. But now, when Gilbert came to Sherborne, and she re-

ceived, as she very soon did, the assurance of an affection which fulfilled even her restless desires, she began for the first time to know happiness, and to suspect herself of ingratitude.

The letters which the pair wrote to Elizabeth, announcing their engagement, filled her with great surprise. The strong affection of Gilbert was familiar to her, and she regarded it as a peculiar and individual feature of his disposition; but the enthusiasm of Millie was a new development. Was love, then, like this? She looked anxiously into her own heart, and inquired of herself how it was that she did not feel thus for her lover. And yet she was sure that she felt as much for him as her nature was capable of feeling. She would die for him, she thought. Oh yes! she answered herself, with a little smile that ended in a sigh. It would not even be a very hard ordeal, for her conscience would

then be satisfied with the extent of her love, and she had begun already to suspect that life was not so satisfactory a matter as it had seemed to her young fancy. She looked again into the letters for some mention of Orlando, some hint which might show him a little happier, and remove from her the haunting remembrance of his pale, grieved face. It was only said that Orlando was pleased, and that he and Gilbert liked each other very much. An eager desire to find food for hope drew a little even from that. There was another passage :—

"Of course you will be my bridesmaid. You know you promised me that, years ago. Ah, Elizabeth, when I used to wish you were my sister we never thought how near I should come to being so, did we? It pleases me so much to think that you are as happy as I am. Write to me all about yourself. Orlando does not seem to

know much about Captain Grove, and Gilbert—well, perhaps you can understand that Gilbert can't be brought to talk much about anybody but himself and me."

Poor Orlando! She could not but understand that Gilbert was likely to take from him more of Millie's companionship than he would atone for with his own. And then to have before him in his love-sorrow this constant reminder of love's joy! She ought to have spared it to him somehow. And for herself, how could she fulfil her old promise of being Millie's bridesmaid? and, on the other hand, how could she break it without declaring the cause? And that she would never do. Even Edward should never know that. She had hurt Mr. Sherborne enough already; she would never put it into any one's power to pity him. With that, came a little wave of cynicism not natural to her, but acquired from Captain Grove. Very

likely, by this time, Mr. Sherborne had almost recovered from his disappointment; for had not Edward said that men soon got over these things? But the bridesmaid question was one which gave her much uneasy thought. She resolved, at last, to put off decision for the present. There would be some months before the wedding. She would wait and see. Very likely she and her father might be abroad again by that time. But this loophole was not left her. The marriage was fixed for September, and she found her coming taken so much as a matter of course that only the most explicit declaration of her motives could have released her. She contrived to shorten the length of her promised stay as much as possible, and trusted that the number of guests would make it easy to see very little of Orlando. It would be difficult to overstate the ashamed discomfort which she felt in the

idea of needing thus to plan and regulate her demeanour.

Orlando, on his side, had made up his mind to permit himself no smallest sign of feeling by which she might be discomforted. The prospect of seeing her again was the greatest delight now left him. He must have been more than human not to rejoice that it was coming, and that it was coming without his power of preventing, so that there could be no question of the duty of denying himself.

Thus, one sunny, September afternoon, Elizabeth found herself meeting Millie and Gilbert on the platform of the little Sherborne station. Millie's surprisingly bright face startled away all painful reflections, and Gilbert's broad smile diffused a sympathetic glow of satisfaction. As they drove home, too, Millie's happy chatter drew off the upper stream of her attention from her own deeper thoughts, harping persistently

upon the one string which she would so gladly have silenced. As they drew nearer to the house, Millie's note changed, and it was, "Look, Lizzie! now you begin to see the house. There's Sherborne Beacon;" and with a laugh across to her lover, "That's what Gilbert calls me." Then came two little figures flying along the terrace, 'followed by their hair,' and crying, "Cousin Elizabeth! Oh, Cousin Elizabeth!"

And in Elizabeth's mind ran, all the while, like the burden of a song, "How if I had been coming to this as my home?" A feeling, too, which it angered her to perceive, whispered how much pleasure this place would have given her —if she had loved Orlando. Within the house, Mr. Sherborne met them. Elizabeth and he gave each a glance of swift inquiry to the other. Mr. Sherborne's resentment, always a plant of difficult

growth, withered away at once. Elizabeth was obliged to feel again that, if she had loved Orlando, she could also have loved his father. Then she was taken upstairs by Millie and regaled with lovers' gossip, interesting only to those who love the lovers. This was carried on while Elizabeth changed her dress, and prepared for dinner, Millie aiding in all sorts of small services, such as, in earlier times, it had always been her part to receive and Elizabeth's to render. Pausing before her, after fixing a flower in her hair, she said suddenly—

"Lizzie, you don't look well."

"I am."

"You have lost your colour, and there is a line coming here, round your mouth."

"It's the end of the season, Millie, and the consequence of late London hours. If we go abroad, as Dr. Travis seems to think we had better, I shall come back blooming."

"Oh no!" said Millie; "I am sure you won't. You will be all that time away from Captain Grove. How can you bear the idea?"

Elizabeth laughed and sighed; the laugh, at the notion of herself pining for Captain Grove, the sigh, at her own incapacity of pining for him.

Millie looked grave, reflecting on her friend's sad case. "You are not likely to be married this year, then?"

"No. Most likely it will be next spring, when we come home. Edward did propose that it should be at once; but I could not let papa go away alone, even with Bannacker and Mrs. Bannacker. By another winter, I hope, he won't need to go abroad, and he will be better accustomed to do without me."

She stopped suddenly—Millie did not guess why—as she heard Orlando's voice upon the staircase.

The girls went down, arm in arm, just before dinner. The room which they entered seemed to be full of people, but Elizabeth's first knowledge was that Orlando was among them. What an absurd cowardice, she said to herself, it was, to be so much more afraid of meeting him than she had been of meeting Lawrence O'Brien; and after four months, too! She kissed her two aunts, shook hands cordially with Mr. Oakes, and, more distantly, with two uncles of Gilbert's whom she knew. Then came Orlando's turn; of course—there was not a trace of emotion in his greeting. It was simple, natural, friendly, just as it always had been. She could hardly believe that that one troubled episode of the Botanical Gardens had ever had a real existence at all. Evidently, he *had* got over it. How vain and foolish to have supposed herself of so much importance to him! Her mind was set

free, and, with a little sense of blankness, she looked round upon the vague fringe of unknown persons. They proved to be, after all, but two—an eagle-faced, elderly man and a slight, dark-eyed young girl. Millie presently introduced her to both. "My uncle, Mr. Pelham;" and "My cousin, Rosa Sherborne."

Then dinner was ready, and she passed into the panelled dining-room, still with that feeling of indistinct blankness. Orlando was pale, but kept the smile on his lips. It was hard upon him to see his dreams fulfilled thus. He had so often pictured Elizabeth in this room—so often fancied her voice and his father's mingling, as they mingled now. He thought, behind his smile, of Macbeth, and that his fulfilment, too, had been of the kind which

> 'Keeps the word of promise to the ear,
> And breaks it to the hope.'

And he had to bear it, and cover up his

suffering as he could, and to talk to Lady Mary, and seem to eat his dinner; and to be conscious, through it all, of every tone of Elizabeth's voice, and aware every time she lifted up her eyes. He kept honourably to his resolution. He talked to her —a sentence or two, with Lady Mary for a third –of her journey down, and of her father's health; just so much as to prevent any notion that he avoided her, and then he neither approached her, nor looked at her, again.

She felt that her plans for keeping apart from him were superfluous and silly. She ought to have known, beforehand, that he might be trusted to keep off all possible awkwardness. Seeing him thus in his own home she began, even in this first evening, to perceive good points in his character, the existence even of which she had not before considered. It did not escape her woman's eye that it was

Orlando whose care and thoughtfulness supplied, in a great measure, the place which his mother had left empty, and which his sister was often too much occupied in her own affairs to fill. It was Orlando who kept Lady Ellen's hours amused, and took care to provide partners for her at whist who should be both skilful and meek-tempered. He it was, too, who was always at hand to take his father's place, when Lady Mary had been talking to him overlong, or when the elder of Gilbert's uncles had discoursed more than enough upon foreign politics. All this Elizabeth saw, and was moved to imitate and assist. She made herself agreeable to Mr. Pelham, and found that he was 'gracious, if he be observed,' and that he had a quiet gift of anecdote, which he bestowed only upon humbly minded listeners. She also cultivated Millie's very shy young cousin, who seemed a little at

a loss between her elders and the children. And, in the course of a day or two, Rosa began to repay her attention by that purest, most unselfish, and least enduring homage which a young girl bestows upon the elder and more experienced woman of whom she makes herself a disciple.

But, before the end of the second day, she had come to understand that her feeling of relief—relief with a touch of contempt and disappointment—had been premature. Orlando's face, so altered, so grown older, told its own tale. She could not but see the change, could not but know that she and pain had done it. Even the unselfish thoughtfulness, for which it was impossible not to like him the better, carried a pang of self-reproach to her heart. The happy sovereignty of youth, that clear view of its own aims, and that blissful assurance of their paramount importance, had given place to the fore-

thought for the comfort of others, which seldom comes to us till we have begun to know doubts of winning our own. Elizabeth saw the change with a yearning pain, such as a mother feels when she sees it in her boy. Profound sadness overcame her whenever she was alone. Yet she hoped that, perhaps, by this time Orlando was recovering from the blow. She could not but believe that time had brought some ease. But, on the third day of her stay, even this lesser hope received a shock.

It was a fine, clear morning. Gilbert had gone to the village on some errand for his father. Millie, after wandering about in an unsettled fashion, suggested that Elizabeth should be taken up into a tower, which rather incongruously adorned one side of the house, and see the view. Ida, Maudie, and Rosa joined them. They wandered, first, into the long room which

served as a picture-gallery, and thence looked into the library to see the famous Vandyke representing the favourite ancestor of the family. His story was a melancholy one, and Elizabeth carried it in her mind as they went upstairs. To her feeling, a shadow of sadness hung over all this house. Millie was passing out of it, and would cease to be a Sherborne, but round Orlando it could only thicken.

"Poor boy!" she sighed within herself, and for the first time felt the word inappropriate.

They mounted towards the tower.

"It is Orlando's favourite den," said Millie.

"Shall we not perhaps disturb him?" said Rosa, drawing back.

"Oh no; he isn't here. He has gone down to the lodge about some repairs. And I don't suppose he would mind if he were."

"It's like the spider's parlour, 'up a winding stair,'" said Maudie, following, out of breath.

Millie pushed open the door at the head of the winding stair, and a perfume came out towards them of tobacco, too constantly renewed to become stale. They entered a small, square room, scantily furnished with odd, old furniture. It had windows in three of its four walls, and as the Beacon Hill lay behind, no rising ground obscured the wide stretch of landscape. Turning from the view, the girls examined, with a shy curiosity, the features of this male lair. Rosa began to exclaim her recognition of an old carved chest, and to declare that Orlando had assured her childhood of its being the very chest mentioned in the 'Mistletoe Bough.' Millie was still looking out upon the road that led from the village. Elizabeth, at Rosa's words, turned from the window, and glanced

round the room. Against one wall hung a map of the county, and against another, in a corner, that little Welsh landscape of Duncannon's, at which they had looked together when it hung on the walls of Burlington House. It brought a sudden shock and rush of remembrance. No one else was looking at it. Rosa was still chattering about the box, Millie still watching from the window. All at once a quick step came up the stair, and Orlando, coming in, was surprised to find the little tower-room filled by a group of guilty-looking, laughing girls.

"Your fort is stormed, Orlando," said Rosa, with the pretty smile and flush which a word or a sharp sound would call up.

"Yes, so I see," he answered. His eyes went to Elizabeth. Hers sprang from the picture to him with startled, almost alarmed, inquiry. The unexpected

moment found him without his customary mask. Question and answer crossed in their looks, and left Elizabeth to feel how vain was her hope of his forgetting.

Then Rosa was asking him if he remembered about the box, and Ida was demanding a translation of the Latin mottoes carved in the stone arches of the windows. Orlando smiled at Rosa's nursery reminiscences, and explained the Latin, word by word, to the children. None of them saw anything unusual in his manner. Only to Elizabeth's ear was the pathetic note of weariness perceptible in his voice. Perhaps the sight of the picture had recalled more vividly the ardent, clear-souled ring which had belonged to it, four months ago. And in the same moment she remembered—or had his eyes reminded her?—that it was a year to-day since that Wednesday when he had seen her first in Shrubb's Wood.

She stood silent, unable to recover ease of speech or unconcern of face.

Millie, catching sight of Gilbert, turned with a satisfied countenance from the window, and the whole party went down again; Elizabeth still quite silent, and surprised at the strength of her own emotion.

Sir William Ayling, a neighbour and fellow magistrate, came back with Mr. Sherborne to dinner, that evening. In a loud, open-air voice he asked Orlando from the other end of the table—

"And when are we to celebrate *your* wedding, my boy?"

Orlando reddened a little, at the unexpected attack, but answered, quietly and easily enough—

"Not just yet, I think, Sir William."

"Eh? Why not? Quite time to think about it. We shall want a lady here at Sherborne when Miss Millie deserts us.

I am afraid you are hard to please, young gentleman."

He glanced round the table with a smile, and there was a moment of silence. Orlando, by an effort, held his eyes from looking at Elizabeth, whose face, steady in expression, had taken, in spite of herself, a deeper colour. Rosa turned pink to the ears. Mr. Sherborne, looking up and smiling, said—

"What! do you want to rob me of both my children at once, Sir William?"

A glance passed from father to son, and the painful moment was over.

Elizabeth wished that the wedding were over too. It would fall to Orlando's share to walk down the church with her, in the eyes of all the congregation. Again she wished that, at any price, she had contrived to spare him this. Surely, she might have found some means to stay away. Or oh, if she could only have known earlier,

and spared him altogether! Edward had warned her. She ought to have believed him. Would she never learn to understand herself and those about her clearly as other people did?

Her meditations upon these subjects were apt to be disturbed by Rosa, and Rosa's conversation inclined to centre more and more round her cousin. Elizabeth, conscious of her own secret cause for avoiding the subject, dared not show the pain which its continual discussion gave her. Rosa, too, began to be a weight on her heart. Was this poor little girl entangled, too, in the web of unavailing wishes and regrets? Was hers an enduring affection, or merely a school-girl's fancy, encouraged by the clinging to family traditions which made a Sherborne heroic in her eyes? Elizabeth saw her often steal into the library, and was as sure as if she had watched her that she stood

contemplating the Vandyke portrait. Once Elizabeth, herself, was moved to do the same, but she, at least, had carried in a book as an excuse to herself. She stood with the book in her hand, looking up at the painting, partly admiring the work, partly studying the likeness of the face, and haunted by a recollection of the sad story belonging to it. She was disturbed by a little rustle in the doorway. Turning, she saw Rosa, standing with her hand upon the door, surprise, suspicion, and a feeling of detection struggling in her face.

Elizabeth did not, as Rosa would have done, turn guiltily from the portrait; but, looking at it again, said, "A fine picture. It makes me feel quite envious. All our family portraits have gone, with the title, to a distant cousin."

The words were a true expression of the smallest part of her thought.

"Yes, I suppose it is a fine picture,"

said Rosa, drawing near. "But isn't there a wonderful likeness?"

"To your cousin? Not quite so much, I think, when you come to look into it."

She put her arm round the young girl's shoulder, and felt her quick breathing as she stood close at her side.

"A sad, melancholy face," she said.

Quick came Rosa's answer. "Yes; and Orlando's is getting to look just like it."

She turned her dark eyes up, inquiringly, to Elizabeth's face.

Elizabeth made no reply, and suffered her face to make none. Only in her eyes the retorted question showed itself, "What do you suspect?"

"Do you like Orlando?" asked Rosa.

"Very much indeed."

"You don't often talk to him."

"He is busy in his way, and I in mine. But I think at heart we are very good friends. Come, Rosie, let us go out of

your uncle's private domain before he comes to wonder what we want here."

She set her book upon the shelf, and they turned away together, Rosa putting up her hand to take that of Miss Glendinning, as it lay upon her shoulder.

"If I come to London in the spring, I shall see you, shall I not?"

"I hope so, my dear."

"I am sure I hope I shall."

They came into the empty breakfast-room and sat down in its window.

Rosa began again, hesitatingly, and with her eyes fixed on Elizabeth's, watchful of any change there which might bid her stop.

"Don't people—in London—admire you very much?"

"Some people, perhaps."

"Girls too?"

"I don't know of any."

"But, I mean, you have lots of friends?"

"Not many friends; a great many acquaintances. Gilbert and Aunt Ellen are the dearest of my friends."

"Except Captain Grove," said Rosa, shyly, and looking down.

"Of course, except him."

"You haven't any *great* friend, then, at all?"

"No, I suppose I have not," Elizabeth answered, rather sadly.

Rosa's face broke into a smile. Putting Elizabeth's hand to her own cheek, she said softly, "I should like to be your friend."

"Would you, Rosa?" said Elizabeth, sadly still; and in her heart rose the thought, "How if she knew what I have done to *him?*"

Gently Rosa drew the hand to her lips, still looking up to Elizabeth with eyes of mute appeal. Elizabeth put her other arm quickly round her, and laid her own

face against Rosa's hair, saying brokenly, "My dear Rosa! my dear child!"

There were tears, if Rosa could but have seen them, in her eyes. Affection was to her so inestimable a good, that its proffer drew from her an overfull measure of return. That Rosa should cling to her, just now, touched the very inmost ring of her heart. They held each other closely embraced. Rosa felt Elizabeth's breath on her forehead, smiled softly, and was happy. A step came along the terrace, and they drew a little apart. Gilbert came, and looked in.

"Oh, Miss Sherborne and Lizzie, Millie is looking for you. A mysterious, blue, card-board box has arrived, which is said to contain wreaths. Would you go and look at them?"

"Where is Millie?"

"Out on the lawn with mother and Aunt Ellen."

They hastened to join him. As they came out upon the terrace, they caught a glimpse between the trees of Orlando, playing battledore and shuttlecock with the children, and laughing as loud as they.

"They want a fourth, Rosie," said Elizabeth.

Rosa looked, and her face grew eager.

"I must go and see the wreaths, though, first," she said.

But when the wreaths had been duly admired, and discussed, and tried on, Rosa slipped away; and Elizabeth, devoting herself to the entertainment of her two aunts, left Millie and Gilbert free to follow her example.

The wedding morning came, bringing that awakening whose first thought is a questioning look at the sky. The sky had a smile for answer, and the mind went forward to the next thought, of important

matters impending at an early hour. The day was unlike any other. Its place in the week and the hours of its course were alike unsettled. The strange, disjointed, early meal was dethroned from its proper title of breakfast by the thought of a later claimant to follow. No one's speech flowed easily; a fluttered anticipation interrupted the natural courses of thought.

Then came an interval of bustling preparation shut into the upper rooms; maids in light dresses and white-ribboned caps flitted about the passages. Downstairs, flowers were being unladen, and the winds that blew through the open doors came and went in gusts of perfume. One by one, guests gathered in the breakfast-room. Two Miss Aylings, wearing pale dresses and long veils, arrived with their father and mother. Orlando, meeting them, seemed to become involved in waves of pink flouncing. "Might they go up to

Millie?" they demanded, and rustling, disappeared. Then, again, an interval. Mr. Pelham looked at his watch. Ida and Maudie came down, also pink, like a pair of rosebuds. Then much rustle of silk, a faint murmur of voices, and the inflow of Millie and her four bridesmaids, together with Lady Ellen and Lady Mary.

To Elizabeth, everything was a kind of dream, in which Rosa, clinging at her elbow, was the clearest figure. The church, with its crowd on the pathways and in the seats, Millie's dewy eyes and trembling smile, the earnest face of Gilbert, were all vague as a half-remembered past. The moment in which the world became suddenly clear again was the moment which found her signing her name in the vestry, with Orlando standing by as he had stood at Sellingham. Then suddenly came a clash of wedding-bells, brighter sunshine broke in, and she was walking down the church

with her hand on Orlando's arm, not daring to look in his face.

The rest of the day was all strange. The wedding-breakfast was unlike all ordinary meals; and when it was over, came the blank feeling proper to the afternoon of a wedding-day, and like no other unless, perhaps, that of coming out from a theatre into daylight, at the end of a morning performance. Judging by the apparent length of the day, it might have been nearly midnight, and in fact it was not yet four o'clock. Millie and Gilbert were gone. Mr. Sherborne was looking pale and melancholy. Lady Mary had disappeared, and was crying a little in the solitude of her own room. Orlando, coming to Elizabeth's side, asked her anxiously, "What can we do to entertain them all for the next hour or two?"

In the evening, there was to be a dance; it was the interval which must be filled.

She was flattered, and a little touched, by his appealing to her.

She looked up, considering. "Could we not have some music? We are to dance in the picture-gallery, are not we? Suppose you suggest that we ought to try how the piano sounds there?"

"Would you begin?"

"If you like; but I think you had better ask Miss Ayling."

"Thank you. Yes, perhaps I had better."

He departed, looking very grateful, and the move was made. Elizabeth, exerting herself to keep up conversation in the pauses, found her reward in the dissipation of her own melancholy; and the interval passed over agreeably enough. The evening came, bringing more guests, and the darkness which seemed to have been so unaccountably long in coming. The hours had at last put themselves in their right

place. Elizabeth, mingling among the others in the dance, had, through all, a sense of unreality. The pictures on the walls seemed more substantial than the fluctuating groups below. She glanced up at the pictures, thinking, "I shall never see these again." A lingering regret was in the background of her mind because she must go away to-morrow. Becoming aware of its presence, she resolutely cast it out, and looked round to see where she might be helpful. Her eyes fell upon Orlando and Rosa, dancing together. Orlando was smiling with a happier smile than usual, and Rosa's eyes were beaming. If she could leave Orlando's heart turning towards Rosa she could go away, relieved. And yet ,beneath her relief, shut into a seed, and allowed no soil for growing, lay a knowledge that she herself would have been the fitter wife for him. She was almost angry with herself for suffering the

question of his future so much to trouble her mind. After all, what was it to her? Why could she not dance, and laugh, and have no sense of guilt? Edward would tell her that she had done no harm—nay, more than that, that only her own vanity suggested the idea. And, with a sigh, she resolved that she would dance and be happy like the rest. We all know how punctually such a resolution fulfils itself, and how natural it was that she should awake, next morning, with a sense of burden, vaguer perhaps, but certainly no lighter, than before.

The next, last day, passed quickly. The hours were busy in a small, superficial way; there was no time to feel emotion. Orlando drove her to the station, Rosa and Maudie accompanying. No single, deeper-touching word was spoken. All was discussion of yesterday. The good-byes were not very fervent—why should they be? Rosa

spoke again of seeing her in London in the spring, but Rosa's mind was busier to-day with other hopes. Orlando shook hands and smiled; there was no trace of forlornness. Then the approaching train drew up and stopped. He had opened the carriage door and gone to see that her luggage was put in.

As the train began to move, she leaned forward. He was near to her window. Their eyes met in that interchange of instantaneous question and answer which had befallen them more than once. Rosa? No, alas! No, it was in vain to comfort herself that way. She *had* done harm, and though Edward, and all the world, and Orlando himself should fail to blame her, she could not cease to blame herself. She drew back, stricken suddenly pale.

Orlando, Rosa, and Maudie turned away to the exit of the station. The hastening train carried her away from them.

CHAPTER V.

IN PARIS.

"Oh, who would be a woman? who that fool,
A weeping, pining, faithful, loving woman?
She hath hard measure still, where she hopes kindest,
And all her bounties only make ingrates."

Scott.

It was the May following Millie's wedding. Elizabeth and her father were in Paris, the Paris of before the war. Away in Germany were drilling the hordes of young men who were to suffer and to die under its walls, next winter; but to Elizabeth the Paris air brought no forewarning of such a storm. To her it seemed a paradise of brightness, sunshine, and pretty things—a city without a care. Yet she was not sorry to think that in a few weeks more

she would be back in London. It was nearly half a year since she had seen her aunt Ellen, who in her last letters had owned to being unwell. Then Edward, too! She pined a little for something which had been felt wanting among the gaieties of flowery Nice, and she thought that the want must be that of her lover's society. His letters were very precious to her, and whenever she received a fresh one, or read over one that was old, she told herself anew that she failed to love the writer to his worth. Captain Grove was a man who showed to great advantage in his letters, and in them Elizabeth could begin to forget the slight but ever-recurring discord which had haunted the later days of their personal intercourse. On the whole, she was returning the happier and the more hopeful for her winter. Her father seemed decidedly stronger, they had made pleasant acquaintances in Nice, and

Mrs. Bannacker, the wife of Major Glendinning's old military servant, who always accompanied them, had this time resigned herself contentedly to the altered conditions of foreign life.

Thus Elizabeth, sitting in the little Parisian drawing-room, with its ill-latching door, its rattling window, and pretty, inexactly jointed furniture, could feel as tranquil in the face of the future as she supposed Paris itself to be. A fashionable painter of modern life might have been well pleased to make her the subject of a picture, as she sat busying her fingers with some insubstantial kind of lace-work, and murmuring to herself a little monotonous burden of song. The picture was broken up by the entrance of Mrs. Bannacker, agitated, yet smiling.

"Miss Glendinning," said she, "here's Captain Grove."

Elizabeth started up, full of alarm, as

Captain Grove walked in, looking white, haggard, and very much aged since last year.

"What is the matter, Edward? What has happened? Aunt Ellen——" cried Elizabeth.

"No, no; nothing," he answered. Then, Mrs. Bannacker having by this time retired, he drew a little nearer and asked, "Won't you say, you are glad to see me?"

"Yes; but you frightened me. Is nothing really the matter? You did frighten me! And you don't look like yourself. Oh, Edward, what is it?"

"I have come to say good-bye; that's all," Captain Grove answered, speaking fiercely and gloomily, yet without the loss of a superficial, smooth composure.

"To say good-bye!" echoed Elizabeth, turning pale.

A thousand vague conjectures pursued each other through her brain; visions,

indistinctly outlined, of some appointment in far-off colonies; fleeting possibilities of falsely aroused, jealous angers against herself.

He stood, looking at her, not hurrying himself to speak.

"Tell me, Edward—tell me!" cried she, trembling.

"I am ruined—that's all," said he, still with the melodramatic touch of ostentatiously suppressed passion, which afforded him the more pleasure in its good effect from being partly real.

"Ruined—in money, you mean? Oh, is that all? But how? Tell me all about it."

And now the flying phantoms took the form of broken banks, collapsing companies, and bankrupt debtors. She could almost laugh.

"Come, Edward, sit down and tell me everything. But, first, you must smile.

Indeed, you must not look at me like that. Do you think I care about money?"

Smiling, not so much from herself as in appeal to an answer from him, she took his hand and made him sit down beside her. Her eyes hung anxiously upon his face.

"I am sure it is not your fault," she said gently.

"It is. It is my fault," he retorted.

And then, while she listened, pale and wide-eyed, was poured into her ears a confused and angry story which she did not very well understand; of betting, and of horse-racing, and of his desire to make money for her sake, and of the certainty of his assurance concerning some particular horse; and then of the foul arts of some adversary (to whom was given a single syllable of low-toned imprecation, spoken with an intensity of hatred that made Elizabeth's blood stand still), and then of the failure

of the horse, and an aggregation of debts impossible to be paid; of disgrace in the eyes of every man in London, of futile applications to sunny-weather friends, and, finally, this flight, and the passionate resolve never to go back to the place where he would be known to have failed and fallen. Last of all came the impetuous outburst, "Of course, I can't hold you—of course you'll leave me too. It was all for your sake; but that's nothing. Of course, I can't be anything to *you* now."

Neither the passion nor the declaration of belief were quite genuine; yet there was enough of reality in both to make his voice tremble and his eyes shine.

Elizabeth, who had let loose his hand, caught it quickly, and raising it, laid her cheek upon it.

"Never," said she—"never!"

She was a woman very chary of caresses, receiving, but never originating endear-

ment, and the action brought to her lover a quick throb of triumph. This was a new sensation, a new stimulus given to the languid flow of courtship. It was something to have won from Elizabeth Glendinning the tribute of such a love as this. Though he had not quite intended to be taken at his word, this quick denial had some of the delight of surprise.

"Oh, Lizzie, Lizzie!" said he; and suddenly, hiding his eyes, dropped his face forward to meet her embrace.

Elizabeth, as they sat, holding each other close, in silence, was for the first time quite sure that she loved him. She was the first to speak.

"If you had money, now at once, could you not put it all right?"

"Yes, if I had it now at once; but I cannot get it; it's impossible." In his mind ran the afterthought, "If I were going to marry a rich woman it would be easy."

"But I think I could. There's the house in Portland Place, and some other money that belonged to mamma. It is not very much, but I dare say I might be able to borrow it on that at once. And then I would sell the house to pay it back. I should come to you all the poorer, Edward, but that's all."

Her smile was lustrous. You might have supposed that the loss of money was a matter for rejoicing. Captain Grove had raised his face, and regained the calm of his everyday demeanour.

"If you were in London—yes, I dare say it could be done," he answered, slowly.

Already a scheme began to work in his brain for getting her away on her journey to England before her father could come in and stop her.

"To-day is Saturday," said Elizabeth. "We were to leave on Wednesday, but I am sure we could make it Monday.

Then I should be able to see Mr. Bradley on Tuesday; or I could write to him at once. That would do, would it not?"

Captain Grove shook his head, and wondered, in the background of his soul, whether she was but playing with him. He had expected her to snatch up hat and cloak and desire to start without a moment's pause.

"By Tuesday it would be all up with me. I stayed as long as I had any hope. If my uncle had had a spark of natural feeling I should never have been in this hole. He has never forgiven me for not selling myself to a wealthy wife."

Elizabeth coloured and trembled.

"Do you mean that I should not be in time to do you any good? Oh, Edward, I have brought this on you!"

She bent down her head on the arm of her sofa and wept. Captain Grove, standing before her, bit his teeth hard upon one

another, and pressed his feet heavily against the floor. If he had yielded satisfaction to the impulse of his soul, he would have broken forth in sarcastic anger against the tears that were wasting his precious interval of time.

"Don't cry, Elizabeth," said he, speaking with an enforced softness and touching her shoulder. "If you will do this for me, the one hope is in haste. If you could get to London so as to see a lawyer to-morrow——"

"To-morrow!" said Elizabeth, looking up, her tears arrested by surprise.

"Yes, to-morrow. Surely this is a work of necessity, and of charity too. If you can do that, it may be done. Else, I think not."

"Of course I will do it. I would go barefoot if that would help. Must I go now, this minute? What will papa say? He is gone to Chantilly with Colonel

Leslie. Could I have time to go to him, or to send Bannacker?"

"You can send Bannacker, if you like; but remember that every fresh person who knows this story is one person more, able to do me an injury."

"Oh," said Elizabeth, and paused, standing by the sofa, stopped in her intention of writing to her father.

"If you could be ready in three-quarters of an hour," said Captain Grove, looking at his watch, "we might catch this afternoon's boat. I will write to your father—something that will not alarm him. And, to-night you would be at your aunt's." And as she still stood, irresolute, hardly able to understand what was required of her, "My dear Lizzie, I am sorry to ask this of you."

"No, no!" she cried, recovering herself and smiling brightly. "Don't say that. If you knew how glad I am to do it! I

was only thinking. I ought to take Mrs. Bannacker with me. And yet, if I do, papa will be uncomfortable, and there will be nobody to pack up all our things. I don't know what to do. After all, if *you* don't mind, I do not see that I should much care whether other people's propriety is shocked or not."

"She would never be ready in time; and your father's comfort is paramount. He will be less alarmed if Mrs. Bannacker is here to tell him by degrees," decided Captain Grove, running over many possibilities in his mind. "And now, dear Lizzie, hasten and get ready, if you are not afraid to trust yourself to me."

"Afraid! No, indeed. And I am an excellent sailor. I will be quick. Here is the key of my desk; you will find everything there."

She gave her keys to him, and hurried away. He, taking them, crossed slowly

to her desk, opened it, and stood considering, then drew a chair and sought paper, pen, and ink. But, when all these were ready, he was slow to write, and reopening the cover, idly lifted Elizabeth's papers. There lay his own letters and a little photograph-case, which he unfolded and looked through. Here were her aunts and the two golden-haired cousins, here were Gilbert and Millie and her father. What had she done with her portrait of himself? He looked a little farther. Here was a miniature-case. He opened it, and found his own photograph laid here within the cover, opposite to the beautiful face of her dead mother. He glanced at the photograph, and thought it looked unpleasantly younger than the face which his mirror showed to him every morning. Then he looked at the miniature, and critically admired its beauty, and wondered how a woman so much like Elizabeth had

come to marry such a fool as Elizabeth's father. Then, hastily, hearing a footstep on the stairs, he closed it up, shut the partition of the desk, and began hurriedly to date his sheet, and to write: "My dear Major Glendinning."

Elizabeth came in quickly to fetch her keys. She had changed her dress to a dust-coloured travelling costume, and had brought with her a long, dark cloak. "I shall be ready soon. I have told them to bring you something to eat," she said, as she went away again.

Being left alone, Captain Grove once more paused, and sat in deep thought. He knew himself to be skilful in composing letters which agreeably skirted the hard outlines of exact truth, but to write to Major Glendinning a letter which should explain his daughter's hurried departure, suggest no blameworthiness on his own part, and yet involve no untruth easy of

disproval, was a task for which he was by no means clever enough. He could find no better way at last than to write that Lady Ellen was ill, and that he had come, at her entreaty, to fetch Elizabeth at once; that he himself did not think so seriously of Lady Ellen's ailments, but that, as Major Glendinning doubtless knew, Lady Ellen was a little capricious, and that she could not bear to have her sister, Lady Mary Oakes, or her younger nieces with her. (This hint was, he flattered himself, particularly diplomatic.) He ended by expressing his disappointment in not seeing the Major, and his hope of doing so in London, next week. Then, in a postscript: "Elizabeth bids me say that she hopes you will not hurry home the sooner for her unfortunate recall. She talked of Mrs. Bannacker's accompanying her, but I have dissuaded her from taking an extra person to Lady Ellen's at such a time."

Closing his letter, he was not sorry to turn to the cold meat and wine which Bannacker had just brought in. The meat he scarcely touched, but drank two or three glasses of Bordeaux, acknowledging to himself that Major Glendinning did, at least, know good wine from bad. Then he strolled to the window, and looking out on the sunny street, began to reflect that he was not so unlucky a wretch after all; and by-and-by that it was a pity he had not a week to spend in Paris—in May, too.

Elizabeth presently came in, ready for her journey, looking a little pale and anxious, but, he thought, now that he was at ease to observe her, more beautiful than ever. After all, debts or no debts, there were plenty of men in London who would give a year from their lives to change places with him.

He went forward to her, put his hands

lightly on her shoulders and kissed her, saying, "You have saved me, Lizzie."

The kiss was for his own satisfaction, an assertion to himself of right and power; the words were the explanation of it which he would have her receive. They went out together, and the long unlooked-for journey began. As they were driven to the station Elizabeth asked some further details, which were given by Captain Grove in many words, but without much enlightening her.

When once they were moving away from Paris, on the road to Calais, Captain Grove began to breathe with freedom. Elizabeth was really on her way now. Yet there were many difficulties to be surmounted before to-morrow morning. From Dover, he must telegraph to Lady Ellen, and perhaps, on his own behalf, to a money-lender with whom he had had dealings at one time and another. That,

however, was a reflection to be kept for the moment to himself. And it would be necessary to let Elizabeth know that he had not given very exact explanations to her father.

The railway carriage, when they started, had been full, but, after three-quarters of an hour or so, they were left with only a middle-aged couple for companions. Captain Grove looked at them, and thought that they appeared unlikely to know English. Still, it would be well to make sure. He would ask of the husband some commonplace traveller's question—whether he would like the window shut.

He did so, and was answered with head-shakings, and with apologies in voluble French.

Seeming to recollect himself, Captain Grove translated his question, and begged pardon for his forgetfulness. After that, he might speak freely.

"By-the-by, Lily," said he, touching Elizabeth's hand.

"Yes," she answered, starting a little, and bringing her eyes back from the landscape outside.

"I did not tell your father the exact cause of your return. I was afraid, Lily. He might well have feared to trust me with his one treasure after that. If I could have spoken, it would have been so different. I made an excuse about your going home to see Lady Ellen, and her being ill."

"Oh, Edward!" said Elizabeth, in a tone of grave disapproval.

"It is true she has been ill, and she did want you to come home; she said so the last time that I saw her."

Elizabeth looked down in silence, but her face did not at all relax.

"I could not have borne that your father should have taken you away from me,"

he pleaded, with deepening tenderness of speech and eyes.

"Do you suppose," she answered, with some scorn, "that I would let my father or any one else take me away from you against my wish?"

Again she turned towards the window, feeling sore at heart.

He for a moment let his face retain its usual mask of calm. Was she going to assume the right of reproof? he asked himself. It was like a woman to be so quick in snatching the supremacy which their relative positions had put within her reach. But he could not afford to anger her, just now. He must conquer by submitting.

"Lily," said he.

It was hardly more than a whisper, but a whisper full of penitent appeal.

She turned instantly. Tears were in her eyes, and her voice shook.

"Forgive me, Edward. I am so hard. How could I—*now?*"

Their hands sought each other under her cloak, and he felt, with quiet self-satisfaction, that his delicate skill had as usual brought him success. Now was the moment to push his advance.

"I was going to ask you not to tell even Lady Ellen the exact truth. You can't think how hard it is for me to feel it known—I, at my age, to be such a fool. But let it be as you like. Anything is better than such a look as you gave to me just now."

"No—did I? I don't know how it is that I never seem to be thoughtful for other people. Of course it must be hard for you. No, I should not like Aunt Ellen to know—I mean, if you think she would misjudge you. And perhaps she might. I won't tell her. You may trust me never to breathe a word to any one."

"My own Lily, how true you are to me!"

"Who should be, if I were not? I am so glad that you trust me so entirely."

He answered only with a look, and sank back again into silence. A little, not exactly trouble of conscience, but rather discomfort, in the idea of how she would feel if she knew all, arose to disquiet him. He could not but remember how, from the beginning, he had come to her with falsehood on his lips; how his wooing had been urged by jealousy; how his constancy—such as it was—was more than half made up of mere triumph in the winning of a prize; how, even at that moment, he was making her ignorant trust the shield to save him from the recoil of his own folly, and worse than folly.

And she sat there, beside him, thinking him a hero of romance.

He felt no remorse; no bitter shame for the wrong he was doing her. That aspect never presented itself. He did not exactly

deny to himself, in formula, that a woman had a claim to just and honest dealing from her lover, but he never would have perceived any such claim as valid against himself. His dread was only that he might lose her. He absolutely trembled in thinking how slight a chance might betray him. A word, a line in a letter, almost the sight of an acquaintance's face, might lose her to him for ever. As he reflected how imminent was the possibility, he felt a sick terror in the fear. He would gladly have gone out to fulfil any form of fetish-worship that could have promised to him the security of his love. He had got through a good many difficult passages of life, adroitly, and without much agitation; sure, always, that he could trust himself to be cool and dexterous, not carried away, like other men, by impulses and enthusiasms. But, here, he felt himself afraid. No loss would be like this loss. He had

thought, when he was certain of her, that he valued his winning, after all, but little; now, when it was only too probable that she would be lost to him, he felt that he would rather kill her than let her go. He dwelt upon that last look of hers—that clinging, tender, self-reproachful accent. After all, there must be something powerful in him to hold fast such a love as that. And she understood him best. She saw him as nature meant him to be, as he might have been, if fate and his uncle had but been a little kinder. Then, again, his thoughts went forward into the tangled web of his own embarrassments. There was yet another step to be taken, but that he might surely defer till they were on their passage. He was really weary of it all. This travelling to and fro after three harassed and hunted days, in which, as he reminded himself, he had scarcely eaten or slept, was enough to try any man.

There was no need to seek any further cause, in lengthening years or energies beginning to decline, or to regard that whisper which hinted that alcoholic stimulus, resorted to in times of crisis, was but a borrowing from the future, liable, like other borrowings, to have repayment demanded, with interest, by-and-by. He permitted himself, therefore, to make no further exertion, just yet, but when they were sitting together on the deck of the steamer he began gently to hint his next suggestion. There *would* be a difficulty in getting hold of Mr. Bradley on a Sunday morning. He lived out of town, too, did he not? It was improbable that they would be able to get an interview with him before Monday morning. And then he would most likely require to see her father before acting.

"I am of age," said Elizabeth, defying in her tone all such mentorship.

"Yes, I know; but an old-established

family solicitor like that will do all he can to put hindrances in your way in such a case as this. And very rightly too, for, in your own interests, it is an unwise thing that you are undertaking. Of course *he* can't understand my feelings—how determined I am never to endanger myself—and you—again. He can't know—how should he ?—that love led me astray this time."

A light of battle began to glow in Elizabeth's eyes.

"But I won't be stopped, Edward. If Mr. Bradley won't help me at once, I'll find somebody that will. It is my own money, and I will do what I like with it."

Captain Grove, though relieved, was a little amazed by this outburst. He began to perceive that it would be a serious matter to be brought into direct collision with Elizabeth. She, still brighter-eyed and redder-lipped than usual, presently turned to him again,

"Do you know anybody else, Edward, who would lend me this money directly? Not that I am afraid of not getting my own way, only they might be able to make it too late. When you have had the money and there is the acknowledgment of it, then there will be no doubt about it, and it will *have* to be paid."

Captain Grove smiled to himself at the rudimentary condition of her financial creed. He answered, not too eagerly, that he knew several such men, but was it altogether wise to be so hasty? She might try to see Mr. Bradley to-morrow. Should he telegraph to him from Dover?

"No, don't. I know how Mr. Bradley would be. Get me somebody else—somebody that you know—and you go and see him and get all the papers, and then let me sign it, or whatever is wanted, before anybody can interfere."

"My darling Lizzie, it is not so simple a matter as you suppose."

"I thought nothing was so easy as to borrow money—I mean, when you had some of your own. Oh, I am sure you can manage, Edward, somehow. If Gilbert were only at home he would lend it me at once."

Captain Grove made no contradiction, but he was glad that Gilbert could not be put to the test.

From Dover a telegram was sent in Elizabeth's name to Lady Ellen :—"I shall be with you this evening. Am called to London on business."

Then followed the second railway journey through the blossoming fields of Kent, and lastly they beheld the grey cloud of London showing dim against the fading skies.

At the terminus they ran against a party of acquaintances, who were all surprise and exclamation at seeing Elizabeth in England. Elizabeth was by this time very

tired, and looked anxious and jaded. Captain Grove was sure that suspicion and curiosity were aroused by this sudden home-coming under no escort but his.

He broke short the conversation, saying with the smile which habit had taught to come easily, "I am sure you will excuse us. Miss Glendinning is tired with her journey, and anxious to get to her aunt—Lady Ellen Darling's—at once."

"How good of you to stop them!" said Elizabeth, as he took his seat beside her in a cab.

That drive of twenty minutes through the rattling streets was for Captain Grove the most oppressive interval of all. For now the image of Lady Ellen, which he had put away from him all day, could be thrust aside no longer. Lady Ellen, with her keen eyes, sharp tongue, and terrible habit of insisting on an answer, was a person for whom he had never felt himself quite a

match. Her deafness was a target against which the fine sword-play of his speech wasted its edge in vain.

The dreaded moment came. They entered, and were received by Lady Ellen's own maid, who came running down the stairs at unwonted speed.

"Oh, Miss Glendinning, I did not think you could have got here so soon. She is a little better, miss, since the morning."

"Who? What?" said Elizabeth.

"Didn't they put it in the telegram, then, miss? My lady had a fit—a kind of stroke—this morning."

"Oh, Aunt Ellen!" cried Elizabeth, clasping her hands together.

To her lover's mind the news brought a sudden light of relief. Elizabeth passed quickly up the stairs, forgetful of his presence. He paused to make appropriate inquiries of the servants concerning Lady Ellen; then, leaving word that he would

look in again, later on, walked home, telling himself that he was the luckiest man in London. As for Elizabeth, she dropped her weariness like a garment, and went to watch all night by her aunt's bedside. All through the long, hot hours she sat wakeful, pondering many things and seeing life grow dark before her.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BEGINNING OF TROUBLES.

"It is the punishment of a relation grounded in untruth that it continually demands falsehood—falsehood, either open, and acknowledged to ourselves, or wrapt in a veil of self-deception; until, finally, the lie makes itself into a virtue, changes all the groundwork, annihilates the contradiction which was, after all, in honest Nature, and says: You must keep faith; you have been friends so long; you have received so much from him,or given him so much: it would be annihilation of your life; you must obliterate a part from it, if you left each other; now, of all times, is the time to hold firmly together. If we had always enough courage and truthfulness not to be drawn in—in spite of inner contradiction—to binding alliances and obligations, always appeasing ourselves with the secret thought: 'All will come right; there is no need to look so closely into things,'—much would be otherwise in the world, much misery would have no place."—*Auerbach.*

Lady Ellen remained long ill, and Elizabeth, of course, stayed with her in Portland Place. Major Glendinning, when he re-

turned to England, was left lonely in Burlington Street, with only Mr. and Mrs. Bannacker to care for him. The absence of his daughter produced a dulness in the house which he was unwilling to attribute to its true cause. He had always chosen to believe that he was, himself, the magnet of attraction to the many visitors who were wont to fill his rooms, and now that their number diminished, he told himself that it was an empty season, and was annoyed that the rest of his world persisted in calling it brilliant. The climate, too, of his native country was not pleasant to him, and here again he was unfortunate enough to differ from the majority, who found the summer of 1870 abundantly dry and hot. Many a time did he regret his beloved villa on the slope midway between Nice and Cimiès, or sigh for the narrow French drawing-room in Paris. As the summer went on, however, hints came to him from

Captain Grove, who prided himself on getting knowledge earlier than the rest of the world—rumours of war abroad, which reconciled him to dwelling in a country that, with all its faults, was peaceful.

As for Elizabeth, meanwhile, she spent two months of great anxiety and strain. The seeming important business which had brought her home had dwindled into very nothingness. She hardly remembered the hurried reading and signing of papers which had taken place on the Monday morning, while she, impatient, and listening with but half her mind, longed to return to her aunt. Since then, she had seen her father and her lover but seldom, and by brief moments, and had had no opportunity of entering into explanations with her father. Captain Grove had told her that all was arranged, had assured her once more that she was his guardian angel, and had vowed never again to be led astray.

He had also given her to understand that no further action would be required of her for the next six months, and then the matter had fallen out of memory. Her whole mind was full of Lady Ellen, who lingered, growing, perhaps, a little better, but unable to form an intelligible speech, and almost unable to understand that of others. Yet her mind was quite clear, and by degrees Elizabeth learned to interpret her attempts at speech. At first Lady Mary had shared her cares, but in the second month of her sister's illness, Lady Mary had attained the dignity of grandmotherhood, and was now at Kensington with Millie. She came, indeed, daily to Portland Place, and so did Gilbert, but the long nights hung entirely on Elizabeth. She snatched an hour, one afternoon, while Lady Mary replaced her, to drive to Kensington and assure Millie of her congratulations. Millie appeared to

have attained a height of perfect bliss, and was already looking forward to her boy's christening. She tried to make Elizabeth promise that she would be his godmother. But Elizabeth, hearing that Orlando was to be one of her co-sponsors, evaded the request, and resolved within herself that nothing should induce her to brave such an ordeal. It was quite sufficiently painful to be required to trace Orlando's likeness in the inscrutable countenance of a nine-days'-old infant.

She was driven rapidly home through the hot aridity of an afternoon which might surely make her father happy. It was now July, and for weeks no drop of rain had fallen; the streets and roads of London glowed with white dryness, the grass shrivelled in every enclosure and the flowers drooped, but the trees bore up bravely, and the fruit-barrows in the streets were piled beyond all precedent with cherries and currants.

Reaching Portland Place, she heard that her father had called, and had reported with satisfaction that he had seen a mosquito in Hyde Park. Lady Ellen was asleep. Elizabeth, after a pretence at a meal, went out into the balcony, hoping to catch, in this corner house, some little cross current of air. An awning shaded the balcony. Its scallopped edge hung, still as wood. It was Friday—a Friday of anxious suspense throughout all London—but Elizabeth knew nothing of the anxiety around her. She had hardly noticed that expectant groups were gathered at street corners and round the doors of news-rooms. But now, as she sat, languid, she heard the still heat broken in upon by a sharp cry. A lad, aproned with a blackly printed placard, came up the shady side of the street, carrying a bundle of papers, and shouting—

"Declaration of war! War between France and Prussia!"

Elizabeth started up and leaned over the balustrade. The street had seemed empty, yet the boy was already surrounded, and his papers were being eagerly bought up. Elizabeth passed quickly indoors to send for one of them. But, as she crossed the drawing-room, her aunt's maid came towards her from the door of it.

"Oh, miss, will you come to my lady at once, please?"

And Elizabeth passed hurriedly up, forgetting all outer things. The man who should have been sent for a newspaper was sent to Kensington, for Gilbert and Lady Mary; and the outer turmoil became nothing in the anxious dread of that night's watch. Looking back afterwards, that day seemed to Elizabeth the last in which she ever looked on the world with hope. For when the morning newspapers began to be cried about the streets, there was no longer any need of silence and wakeful-

ness, no further use in all the careful preparations of the sick-room, no change to be hoped or feared. The breath of the new day, hardly cool, even in its dawn, came to Elizabeth like the atmosphere of a new and empty world. The strange feeling of having no further motive, nothing to keep up for, nothing to watch, made all the present and the future a blank. Upon that, followed an overpowering weakness—in the fine old word which we have learned to abandon, a heaviness, that made rest the one good in the world. She slipped from Lady Mary's embrace, and let herself glide down upon a soft, long woollen rug at her feet, and there, before her aunt could speak to her, lay asleep.

When, at last, she opened her eyes, she was lying on a sofa in the drawing-room; it was full day, but blinds were drawn down at every window. By her, in the shadow, sat Gilbert.

"Ah—but what was it? Did I fall out of the swing?" she murmured, looking up at him.

Gilbert was, perhaps, the only person who could have understood what dream was still lingering in her mind. "Do you feel so ill as that, Lizzie? No, that's over, dear, long ago. We have grown up since then."

"Ah, yes; I remember." She closed her eyes again. "When I am very tired or ill I often dream of that—the falling, falling, as if it would go on for ever, and seeing the swing come back upon me, and knowing I could not stop it. Only I thought Edward was there too."

"He came in, this morning, but we did not wake you."

"Yes," said Elizabeth; and then her loss returning upon her afresh, she folded her hands over her face, and began to cry, weakly.

"Don't, Lizzie, don't," said her cousin, gently. "You will make yourself ill, you know."

"It doesn't matter now," she answered, and the desolate tone went to Gilbert's heart.

"Lizzie, I want to say a word to you."

"Yes, Gilbert."

"Whoever else you love, Lizzie, whatever else comes to you, remember this—you will never lose me. You and I have been brother and sister ever since the day you were born."

Elizabeth put a hand into his, and lay, silent, weeping no more.

Captain Grove, coming out of the War Office, that afternoon, in the full blaze of a two o'clock sun, met Lawrence O'Brien, just home from a yachting expedition, and sunburnt almost beyond recognition.

"Grove," said that eager young man,

linking an arm at once through his, "I want to speak to you. I have got a question to ask you."

Captain Grove gave a glance at the speaker's face and found there no hint of suspicion. As he glanced, a quick thrill of envy shot across him. O'Brien, with the brightness of his eyes and teeth heightened by the contrast of his brown skin, seemed the very incarnation of happy youth and hope. He was dressed, too, in the palest tint of grey, and looked the better for a costume which Captain Grove felt would have been fatal to himself. He smiled, however, with all urbanity, and Lawrence poured forth his question.

Would it suit Captain Grove to go abroad for a month, or perhaps it might be more—till the end of the war, in fact—as private secretary to Sir Anthony Kelly? Sir Anthony Kelly was Lawrence's cousin by marriage, and had been desirous to take Lawrence himself.

"But, bless you, I don't want to be advanced. Poor old chap! he thinks it would be better if I were such another as himself. What would I bother myself for? But I thought you would be just the man. You have heard about his going, I take it?"

"Something of it," said Captain Grove, with official caution, covering, as he fully believed, a far more accurate and complete knowledge than Lawrence's own.

"He is not to have any recognized mission, you know—a very delicate and discreet sort of thing. Just a retired English officer, wandering round in foreign battle-fields to see how fighting has changed since his young days. You see, I might have gone, in a very natural way, as his relation; but I should not have liked the business part of it—the writing in cipher, and what not. But, you know, the man who did it well would get a great

rise out of it. Sir Anthony is to have the choice of who goes with him, and I spoke of you to him. Only, as I said—I don't know—there's your marriage. You might not like to put it off?"

"It will have to be put off, in any case, for Lady Ellen Darling died this morning. I am much obliged for the suggestion, O'Brien. I think it is very likely it might suit me remarkably well. But, between ourselves, and as a private individual, I think Sir Anthony is more likely to find himself detained six months than one."

"What!" said Lawrence. "Do you think the Prussians will be so hard a nut to crack as that."

"Perhaps I meant the French," said Captain Grove, with a thin smile.

That Lawrence took to be a joke, and laughed accordingly.

Then a young man coming up and addressing him loudly by name, he parted

from Captain Grove, who walked homeward, cogitating. From what he knew of Sir Anthony and his mission, he thought that such a post would suit him very well. He also honestly thought, though that was, of course, a secondary consideration, that he would suit the post. The twilight of diplomacy was an atmosphere that he enjoyed. It flattered his vanity to feel that he meant more than met the eye, and knew more than those who thought to give him news. Then he would, doubtless, be well paid, and, to use Lawrence's expression, he would decidedly get a rise out of the change. His comrades of the War Office would envy him, and take it for granted that exceptional qualifications had been discerned in him. Oh, it would be the opening to him of a new life. Perhaps he might even reach a condition in which his income should be sufficient to satisfy his desires. A visionary drawing-room

rose before him in which Elizabeth received his guests, and to which those whom he rated as 'the best people in London,' pressed to gain admittance. It might be, too, that Lady Ellen had made Elizabeth her heiress. Elizabeth had never spoken a word on that subject, and he had too clear a vision of what he might *not* be allowed to do, to ask. But now that point would be settled one way or the other, and he would know what he had to reckon upon.

And in a week or so, he heard that Lady Ellen had, indeed, left most of her property to Elizabeth, who thus became possessed of a second house in Portland Place, and a considerable yearly income derived from no less stable a source than the Funds. He heard also that Lady Ellen had discussed her arrangements with Gilbert and his father some months before, and that she had acted with their

full approval; but that appeared to him too preposterous for belief.

Elizabeth went back to her father in Burlington Street, and, there, began to arrange her life for the next few months. Edward was going abroad—going, he did not deny, into possibilities of danger, but in a position which, he took care to explain, was a personal honour. She resolved that she would not speak to her father and to Gilbert of that debt till he should be gone. That it should be paid before she herself left London she was quite determined. They were to go soon, to Willingshurst, and thence—supposing, that is, that the difficulties of foreign travel were not allayed by that time—to Brighton. Already Major Glendinning was beginning to complain that August was at hand, and that to be in town in August was unendurable. To all this Elizabeth looked forward passively, feeling the days long

until she was away. Her strongest feeling just now, was a nervous dread lest she should meet Orlando Sherborne, who, she heard, was in town, busy with plans and schemes for some watering-place on the east coast, and deaf to the warnings of Gilbert, who looked on the enterprise as very ill founded. The overtension of her nerves during the last few months seemed to avenge itself in the exaggeration of this dread. It was literally with terror that she went to see Millie and Gilbert. And at last the almost inevitable meeting took place. She was in Bond Street, waiting in an open carriage, for Lady Mary, who had gone into a shop; and as she waited she saw Orlando coming amid the stream. He was quite unaware of her presence. He paused to glance at an engraving in a shop-window. Her fear took suddenly a new form. Oh, how cruel it would be if he should pass and not see her! But he

turned and looked up, and his face changed. She thought he would speak, but he merely bowed to her, and passed on. For a moment their eyes met; then the stream of the world went on again. He had looked well, she thought, but perhaps older, and a little preoccupied. Then, in the flash of recognition, he had turned paler, and she had felt herself guilty, as she always did when she thought of him.

"Ah, if *that* might have been!" thought Elizabeth within herself.

Then her aunt came out from the shop, and she was driven home to Burlington Street, whither Captain Grove was coming this afternoon to take his farewell.

The next day, when he was well upon his journey, and out of reach of question, she laid before her father and Gilbert the amount of her debt, and explained her desire to sell out so much of her capital as would suffice to pay it.

They looked aghast.

"But how did you get this money, and what did you want it for? Where is it? What have you done with it? You can't have spent this sum since May."

"Oh yes," said Elizabeth; "it is spent. I had it; I had it all. It was something that I was obliged to do. I would have told you sooner, if I had been at home—if I had not been in Portland Place."

"Did Grove ask you to do this?"

"No," said Elizabeth.

"Did he know it?"

"Yes, he knew it, and he helped me. He knew all about it, and he approved; but I can't tell any one else. I have made a promise that I would not tell any one else."

"You had no right to make such a promise," said Major Glendinning, angrily. "A girl like you! I don't think such a promise is binding. I think you ought to

tell me. I have a right to know what you wanted with a lot of money like this. Why, it is dated the very day after you came back to England! You found time to see to this when your aunt was supposed to be dying. I can't understand it."

"I can't tell you about it, papa—indeed I can't. It was not for any wrong purpose. It was something I *had* to do. I could not help it."

"Was it something for your aunt?" asked her father, quickly.

The possibility that it might be some whim or some secret of Lady Ellen's, something which she had bidden Elizabeth pay, knowing that, as her heiress, he would be repaid, came to him like a ray of light among those unpleasant doubts of Captain Grove which tended to make the future so inauspicious.

"Don't ask me," said Elizabeth; "I can't tell you anything more. Only let it

be paid, please, for it is honestly due. I had the money, and I agreed to it all."

"I suppose it must be paid," said Major Glendinning, still annoyed. "I suppose it was for Grove. I should like to know what he has done with the money. I shall never feel any confidence in him again. No honourable man would have taken money from you."

"And you have no right to assume that he did so," said Elizabeth, feeling her heart beat quicker, and vowing to herself that no living soul should ever know the secret of that home-coming.

Her father looked at her, almost shaken in his doubts again. Gilbert, on the other hand, was more confirmed in his assurance. He had known, from the first words, for whom the money had been paid.

"Well," said Major Glendinning, "it is done. But mind, Elizabeth, let me have no more of this kind of thing. It is not

respectable; you don't know who may have that bill of yours."

Gilbert, after his first exclamation of surprise, had said nothing. Nor did he, when, presently, he was left alone with Elizabeth, attempt any inquiry. But in the next day or two he sought information cautiously from other sources, and his certainty was strengthened. On the eve of her departure from London he found an opportunity of speaking a few words to her, alone.

"Lizzie," said he, "will you promise me something?"

"If I can, Gilbert."

"The next time that you want to lend money to Captain Grove, let me know, instead of trying a money-lender."

"No; I can't promise that," said Elizabeth, turning pale. "You ought not to have said that to me."

"But you can't deny it. Oh, Lizzie,

Lizzie! if you only knew how dark your future looks to me!"

"Would it be any better that I should know it?" she returned.

And almost with those words upon her lips, they parted.

Gilbert held his peace towards Millie concerning all that little episode, but being overburdened by it, and feeling quite sure of Orlando's discretion, poured forth the tale to him.

"I always knew he was never worthy of her," said Gilbert, resentfully.

"But she loves him?" Orlando said.

"Yes, I suppose so. It is not to be helped. But oh! how is it that she can be so blind?"

"But he is spoken highly of," said Orlando.

"Oh yes; he will never do anything very bad. I don't suppose that he will forge cheques, or pick locks, or do any-

thing to bring himself and her to any open disgrace. I think he will, very likely, be a successful man, and we shall be proud to have him to dinner. But he'll *never* make Lizzie happy. And if he should, her happiness would be worse than pain."

Orlando sat silent, but hoping in his heart that Gilbert judged falsely. Unhappiness for her! Surely Heaven could not so contradict itself. The man to whom her love was given could surely not be base. And she was at Willingshurst again, in the place where he had seen her first.

Gilbert little knew how fruitful a seed he had planted of self-tormenting thoughts.

CHAPTER VII.

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE.

"If thou wast false, more need there was for me
Still to be true."

J. R. Lowell.

The woes of France made, that year, the prosperity of Brighton. The town was full of French people; almost as much French as English was heard spoken about the streets, and Major Glendinning, except when an east wind reminded him, might almost forget that he was in his own country. It was November now. Captain Grove was still abroad with Sir Anthony Kelly. Letters did not come from him very frequently, and when they did come, they were guarded in expression. Elizabeth understood that in the then state

of the French post-office, letters were liable to pass under more eyes than those of the receivers. A hint had, however, been given in one of them that a certain morning paper had an inkling of Sir Anthony's being more than a mere casual traveller, and was likely to give careful reports of what happened in his neighbourhood. Elizabeth was therefore attentive in her study of this paper, and found her lover's progress very accurately followed.

Every now and again his name was mentioned, and always with some complimentary reference. She began to hear little remarks from her friends.

"So Captain Grove is still at the seat of war? I suppose it is really his devotion to his profession; but it must make you very uneasy." Or, "I see by the *Intelligencer* that Captain Grove was at A. at the time of its bombardment. He really is most courageous." Major Glendinning,

too, began to speak in more gracious tones of his future son-in-law. Things were in this state when Elizabeth came one morning upon his name, no longer in the Foreign Correspondence, but appearing more than once in a leading article. Hastily she folded back the rest of the paper and read :—

"It is rumoured that Captain E. Grove, who left this country last August, in company with Sir Anthony Kelly, upon an unavowed, but pretty generally understood, mission of observation, is likely to be recalled, somewhat abruptly, to England. No cause is assigned for this somewhat arbitrary procedure, but it is whispered that the explanation lies in a difference of opinion between the honourable baronet and his coadjutor. Sir Anthony, whose services to his country have, we believe, been hitherto chiefly confined to the compression of army estimates, finds that the recommendations

of Captain Grove would involve the Government in the sanctioning of changes in many trifling points which have long demanded change. He would, for instance, advise a new form of head-dress which might protect, without overburdening, the head, and would substitute for the throttling burden of knapsack to which the British soldier is at present subjected, a light and commodious *havresack*. But, says Sir Anthony, the Government stores are already amply supplied with busbies and with knapsacks. To replace these by *havresacks* and *pickelhauben* would cost money, and to spend money might make the Government unpopular; and the unpopularity of the Government might produce a change which would deprive Sir Anthony Kelly of his occupation, and transfer to other hands the compression of future army estimates. Sir Anthony, it is very clear, understands the first duty

of a Government Commissioner—which is to report nothing that his superiors do not wish to hear. Captain Grove has attempted to fulfil his duties in another spirit, and he must, of course, accept the consequences. We advise him to lay the lesson to heart, and learn to be wiser another time."

Elizabeth read this passage, and read it again, and could not understand it. On the inner sheet was, as usual, a letter from the place of Captain Grove's present stay. In this she found these words:—

"I hear that Captain Grove, who, as your readers will scarcely need to be told, was the associate of Sir Anthony Kelly's investigation tour, is suddenly recalled to England. No cause is assigned, but your readers may be edified by the opinions of an old *militaire* with whom I conversed on the subject. 'Parbleu, M'sieur,' said he, taking a pinch of snuff, 'M. le Capitaine

a la vue trop claire. Il voit les choses comme elles sont, et cela ne convient point à Sir Kelly.' Perhaps you, in England, know more about this matter, but the shrewd guess of the *vieu militaire* seemed to me worthy of attention."

She took the paper to her father, whose first verdict was: "All humbug, my dear, all humbug. These newspaper fellows will write anything." He looked at the article again. "I hope Grove has not been such a fool as to fall out with Sir Anthony. It would be very unbecoming. Sir Anthony was, for the time being, his commanding officer. Don't say anything to any one, Elizabeth. Don't, above all, say anything to your aunt Mary."

Lady Mary and her husband were in Brighton, drawn thither chiefly by the fact that Ida and Maudie were there at school. This afternoon was a half-holiday. Elizabeth was to go with her aunt to fetch

them home. On their way the children were taken into Mutton's. The shop was very full, and Lady Mary found friends. Elizabeth, standing a little away from her aunt, heard suddenly a name spoken behind her that drew her attention.

"The *Intelligencer*, my dear! Of course it does. Why, it seems this Captain Grove has been sending reports to the *Intelligencer* ever since he first went out. My husband heard of it in London, last night. A most discreditable thing."

Elizabeth turned quite sick. She dared not look round, lest the speakers should be persons who might recognize her. She stood in terror, waiting for more.

"Did you ever happen to meet this Captain Grove? A most gentlemanly man, my husband says—as far as manner went—and held a high position in the War Office. I'm told he was engaged

to be married to Lady Somebody, a beauty."

"Oh, that will be broken off now," said the other.

At this, Elizabeth knew that she might turn round. She just glanced at the speakers. They were stout, middle-aged women, and a thousand little signs showed her that they did not belong quite to her own class. Had Edward's doings come already to be so widely discussed as this?

She was thankful to get home, away from Aunt Mary and the girls, but as she went in, the fear struck her that her father might have heard. Happily, he was out.

Mrs. Bannacker was lingering, with a concerned face, in Elizabeth's room. Elizabeth was sure that she had read the *Intelligencer*. She allowed her no opening to speak of it, and hastened to the drawing-room. There she sat down, utterly miserable. She had no doubt of the truth of the

story. She felt, inevitably, that it must be so. It was what Edward would have done. And now, where was he, what had become of him, and what would happen to him? Oh, if she only were not so friendless and so alone!

While she sat, came a loud knock at the door below. She trembled. Here were visitors, and how should she receive them? Most likely they would know. Then she heard a voice asking for herself, and for one fraction of an instant fancied the voice Orlando's.

"I will go up to her," she heard again, and knew that, of course, the voice was Gilbert's.

"Oh, Gilbert! What a comfort!" She sprang up and ran towards him as he came in.

"Gilbert, Gilbert! Oh, how glad I am that you have come! What has happened? What is the truth about Edward?"

"I am afraid it is all true, Lizzie. How did you hear? Who told you?"

"I heard some people talking at Mutton's, and I saw the *Intelligencer*, this morning. But I don't understand, Gilbert. What is it that he has done?"

"Why, look here, Lizzie. Sir Anthony went out as a sort of agent, to watch, as far as he could, the different peculiarities of the two armies—to see where they failed and where they succeeded, and in what points their arrangements were different from ours. There was no distinct mission or appointment given him, because that would rather have hampered him, and might have led to his being wilfully deceived. Grove went with him, as his secretary. Of course they were both of them bound to keep their purpose, and still more their information, from being brought into public notice. Now, Sir Anthony had been annoyed for some time by the *In-*

telligencer publishing observations which bore a sort of general resemblance to his reports; but there was nothing that could be laid hold of till last week, when something was published which he was certain no one but Grove could have got hold of. So he sent to have him recalled. Well, within two days of that, the *Intelligencer* comes out with that bit of leader that I suppose you saw. There was a great scandal about it in London, this morning. The tale had leaked out somehow. These things always do. They say Sir Anthony will be made to bring an action for libel against the *Intelligencer*, but I don't think that, myself. They will have to recall *him* too, you know, for of course such an article as that renders him perfectly useless."

Elizabeth sat silent. What was there to be said? She clasped her hands together, lifted them, and dropped them again into her lap.

At last she asked, "Where is he, Gilbert?"

"I don't know," said Gilbert, his face darkening a little. "You don't want to see him?"

"Why, I must see him. I must hear what he says."

"I consider that he has forfeited the right ever to see you again."

"Ah, but if Millie had done such a thing—if it could have been possible—would you have given her up?"

"Millie! I never could have given up Millie; you know that. But it is an impossible supposition. And besides, he is a man."

"From whom you expect honesty, which is a less important virtue in a woman," said Elizabeth. Then, with a deep sigh, "I don't believe that he would give up me, whatever I had done. Oh, Gilbert, don't make it harder for me to do whatever I

feel that I have to do! There are some things in which one must walk quite alone. Not one's best friend can help or counsel one, any more than when one dies. And one's love affairs are so. I must do what I feel I must, at the time. I should be glad if you would try and make papa understand that I must."

"I am sure that he will wish you to break it off. He has never felt quite easy since he heard of that debt. Of course, he could not help knowing whose it was."

"It seems to me," said Elizabeth, rather angrily, "that you are all against him, without even waiting to hear his defence."

Gilbert remained for a moment silent, and then said, "Most likely he will be in London on Monday. I wish you would give me the right to see him for you."

"I will not give any one the right to see him for me," said Elizabeth. "If he does not come here to see me, I shall go to

London, myself, to see him. But thank you, all the same. You must not think I don't understand how you mean to do everything for my sake, only any defending of me against him makes me rather angry."

She looked up, appealingly, and won an absent-minded smile.

"Here comes your father," said Gilbert.

"Oh, yes. Do stay a little, Gilbert; I am afraid he will be so vexed about this."

The anxious, piteous look, which had grown frequent during the last months, returned.

Major Glendinning came in, having heard the whole tale, and taking for granted that his daughter's engagement was at an end. There followed a very painful scene. Elizabeth sat, pale and still, hardly saying a word, but maintaining her position, that she would not discard her lover till she had heard his story from

himself. Gilbert's attempts at mollification were but of little use. At last, when her father declared that he would not suffer Captain Grove to come to the house, she stood up and said, moving her hands to and fro—

"Then I must go to London to see him. If he is not to come here, I must go to Portland Place. It is only right, and I must. Don't talk to me any more; I can't bear it. Oh! don't you think it's enough by itself?"

With a sudden sob, she broke into tears, and hurried out of the room

"If she sees him, he will talk her into doing anything he likes," said her father to Gilbert.

"I wish she had never seen his face," said Gilbert; "but, all the same, I think she is right to let him come."

"I wish to Heaven she had married O'Brien," sighed Major Glendinning.

"Indeed, I wish she had," said Gilbert. "He is not very wise, and not, perhaps, very steady; but he is honest and straightforward, and his first thought would have been to make her happy."

"And nearly ten thousand a year," said Major Glendinning. "Well, I suppose I shall have to let him come."

Elizabeth, herself, felt no such conviction that to see her lover would be to ensure the continuance of her engagement. Deep down in her heart, lay a sore and bitter indignation against the man who had brought disgrace upon himself and her. The whole affair was unendurably painful to her. She could hardly bear to recall the words of Gilbert, and of those women in the shop. And if, indeed, there should be such an action for libel as Gilbert had spoken of, and Edward should have to confess that he, himself, had written that correspondence! And it would be in all the

newspapers, and there would be articles upon it. Oh, now, indeed, she felt the bitterness that lies in the modern torture of publicity. Every voice in England would speak of it; every soul who knew her would know this; the very servants in her friends' houses, when they opened the door to her, would know it. She clenched her hands, and lifted up her face with closed eyes, towards the sky. Ah, if it had been Orlando, he would never have brought this upon her. She felt, by moments, as if she hated Captain Grove. Then rose up before her, her father's and Gilbert's condemnation, and she felt the balance of her soul dip on the other side. Should all hands be against him, and hers, too? Oh, they were hard upon him, for, after all, what wrong had he done *them*? She, at least, must not be fickle as the world was. She would hear him, and make allowance, and perhaps—if she could

—forgive. She would try not to think a single harsh thought of him until he wrote ; as surely he would write, to-day or to-morrow.

But neither on that day nor the next did any letter come. The greater part of a week went by and brought no sign. These days were days of agony. Elizabeth felt that, as she walked in the streets, people looked at her, and pointed her out as the woman who had been engaged to "that Captain Grove, you know." Her acquaintances spoke to her in a careful, guarded tone, hiding something in the background of their minds, and always, as she told herself, observing to see how she bore it. Another week like this would drive her mad. And where was Edward ? Was he not coming to her, after all ? Had all her tenderness and her suspense of judgment been but useless ?

This week of pain left its mark upon

her almost like the mark of a long illness. Her cheeks grew hollow, and her eyes large and frightened; her hands were restless; she flushed and started at a sound; her voice had a weakened, plaintive note. Orlando might hardly have known her for his vision of Shrubb's Wood.

At last, one afternoon, the meeting for which she seemed to have been looking all her life, came. She was lying, completely wearied out, on a sofa. She had told Mrs. Bannacker, truly enough, that she had a bad headache, and must be excused from seeing any one. When, therefore, she heard a knock, she gave no heed, but lay still, following her own unhappy thoughts, as before. Mrs. Bannacker, however, after a minute or two, came in, bringing a folded sheet of paper. "It's Captain Grove, miss. I told him you were unwell, and not to be disturbed, but he begged me to give you this."

In her tone dwelt a disapproval of Captain Grove, as decided as Major Glendinning's own.

"Even she, too," thought Elizabeth.

She held out her hand, hastily, for the paper. A few lines only were written on it, in pencil.

"Let me see you, if it is only for a minute. You cannot be so cruel as to refuse me. I leave England to-morrow."

"Ask Captain Grove to come up," she said, lifting her eyes quietly to Mrs. Bannacker's; and Mrs. Bannacker was obliged, very reluctantly, to obey.

Elizabeth rose to her feet, and stood holding the letter in her hand. The momentary colour and animation of her face hid any suggestion of illness; nothing was left but an etherealized delicacy of line and form. Captain Grove, as he came into the room, thought that he had never seen any woman look so beautiful.

"Lizzie!" said he—"Lizzie!"

He took her hand, but, wisely, dared not kiss her.

Her hand returned no pressure. She stood looking at him without a word, like a dumb creature. He, too, stood, keeping his eager eyes upon her face, and feeling, for the moment, as if all his desire had been attained in having sight of her again. As usual, it was she who was forced to speak first.

"Why have you come?" she asked.

She felt as if this actual meeting had shattered all the illusions of the past, and shown the impossibility of all union between them, for ever.

"Why did I come? I was obliged to come. I think I should have died if I had gone away and not seen you. Look here, Lizzie; I have done nothing but what hundreds of men do. It is almost an acknowledged thing. They chose to fall

upon me, and, of course, there's no appeal. Upon my soul, Lizzie, I believe that it is O'Brien's doing, to get me out of your way."

"No—oh no," said she.

"They must have known that I should do something. What do they offer a man a paltry thousand a year for, in such a post as that? And then the longing to raise myself—to gain a position fit for you——"

"No, no; not me. Don't tell me that you thought of me."

"I thought of nothing but you. And to get on good terms with a large newspaper like that!' Lizzie, if Sir Anthony had not chosen, in his jealousy, to ruin me, there's no knowing what position I might not have reached. His whole report is my doing. He was afraid for his own credit, that's the truth of it. And now every man turns his back upon me, though

there's not one of them that would not have done the same, and thought himself lucky in the chance. And the *Intelligencer* threw me over. Nobody keeps to me—nobody. And they will make you go too. When I come back you will be married to O'Brien."

"I shall never be married to Mr. O'Brien. You, of all people, have no right to say so. But what do you mean by 'when you come back'? Where are you going?" Again, as she spoke, her face lost its colour, and the lines of fear came back about her lips.

"I am going out as war correspondent to the *Oppositionist*. They sent me an offer the day I came back to England. It shows what the feeling is among the newspapers about the way I have been treated. By Jove! the man that takes Sir Anthony's place will have cause to repent it."

"You are going into the war again?" said Elizabeth, her voice falling.

"You are not sorry, Lizzie—you are not sorry? Do you mean to say you care? Oh, if you knew what I have undergone, I think you would care!"

"I do care. Oh, I wish you had never gone!"

"You would have been married to me by this time, if you ever meant what you said."

She stood, growing paler and paler, and at last, said, as in desperation, "It might have been better if I had."

"You would have gone away from me now, even if you had."

"It never would have come upon you, if I had. You never would have done it."

"No, Lizzie, no; you are right. I never should have done it. Ah, if I could only have you by me always! If I might only have won you, years ago, I might have

been another man by this time. Nobody knows the best of me but you. Nobody cares but you. And you not very much, Lizzie—not very much."

Elizabeth, as he spoke, felt that anything in the world would be possible except to abandon him. She answered slowly, white now as marble, "I don't know, Edward. I think you are right when you say I am cold-natured. I won't say a word to you more than is true; that would be the greatest wrong to you of all. I have felt very angry with you—no, more than angry, divided from you—as if we could never be anything but strangers any more."

"No, Lizzie, no; not that."

The cry went to her heart.

"No, but let me finish," she said, quickly, turning to him, still with that look upon her face of pressure from some external fate, of some compulsion, making her,

as it were, but the voice through which an oracle insisted upon utterance. "But now, when you are here, when I see how everything seems to you, I feel as if I could no more say 'Go' than I could kill you. It is a thing that could not be. I don't see any happiness before me, anywhere—not any hope. If I might die to-night, I should thank God. But while I am alive, there seems to be only one way. If you have done wrong, if every one else deserts you, it makes it more impossible that I should; not because it gives me any happiness, but because it is so, and I must. I could never forgive myself if I did otherwise. It would haunt me, always. And yet I know—I know—that nothing lies before me but pain. Only, this pain is possible, and the other is not. I suppose that is love."

Captain Grove stood, almost frightened. If an actress had stood and spoken before

him thus, on the stage, he would have understood that her art had touched a height. That a living soul should actually work thus was out of the sphere of his conceptions. He seemed to have come suddenly into a region of measureless heights and depths. Once before, in the moment of her first acceptance, Elizabeth had touched the spring of this same mysterious awe. In his heart awoke the whisper, "This is not for me—not of my nature, nor my world." For a few quick pulsations, the doubt lived whether it would not be better to set her free; for the space of a completed thought, his own personal hope ceased to be the centre of his soul. What could he do with a nature so all unlike his own but stifle it, or let it fly? If he tried to hold it fast, would it not shrink and perish in his hands? For one moment, he understood that there was a gulf between them deeper than that of death; he

saw before him, as in the sudden clearness of a lightning flash, that the only influence he could ever have upon Elizabeth's life would be the influence of a blight. And then, as the darkness comes back, swallowing into itself the illumined view, the former colours of thought returned. Give her up, in the first moment when she had ever assured him of her love! She did not even ask that he should give her up; she would hardly understand what he meant. And if he gave her up, what should become of him? She was all that remained to him, the one step by which he might climb back into the world from which he had fallen. Her faith was the one link to all that was good; her assurance of love, the one bond that held him to humanity. And he *would* not be a blight upon her. He would change; he would learn to be like her. No one had loved him yet, and the future was still long.

He took her passive hands in his, looked at her white, despairing face, and lifted one of her hands to his lips, murmuring, "I'm not worth it; but it's my only hope."

She let her eyes sink a little to meet his as he stooped.

"Lizzie, I *will* be different—I *will* be good enough. Only tell me that you love me, and that you will be true to me. Let me have those last words to take with me."

"Oh yes, I love you. I did not think that love was like this; but everything is different from what I thought. And, yes, I will be true to you. There's no need to make a promise; I can't help it, as long as you will let me."

"And when the war is over, I may come back to you, and we may be married, Lizzie, and go away together."

"Don't," she said, lifting her hand with a shudder; "I can't look forward. Indeed, Edward, I can't make any promise. I

could not marry you—yet; you have shaken all my hopes too much. More time must go by first. But you will, you will try to make some hope for me in my life? You won't make me feel that it is all in vain, and that I have never been able to do anything for you, after all, will you? You'll think of me when you are away, and try not to do anything that I should be sorry for, if I knew. You ask me if I will be true to you, but oh, will you be true to me? Will you never be glad that I am not there, because the things that you are doing are not straightforward? I would rather scrub rooms to earn my living than hold a good position won—yes, as you would have won it for me. Oh, do remember that. I am not afraid of anything, except of being ashamed to myself. Oh, you have made me suffer so much in these last days—if you could only know how much! But that's all past.

Look, I forgive you; let us never speak of it again. We will begin again. I *know* you will never make me suffer like that again, Edward."

She laid her arms softly round his neck and kissed him.

For him, tears were standing in his eyes, and his heart swelled with such a pain as he had never known. He could not speak. He held her pressed against him, and his lips shook. Once more he kissed her, then hastily released her, caught up his hat, and went

CHAPTER VIII.

LEFT ALONE.

"Man's affections are but the tabernacles of Canaan—the tents of a night; not permanent habitations even for this life."—*F. W. Robertson.*

In the story of individual lives, as in the history of nations, the march of events is a very irregular one. Now the procession hurries, one occurrence treads on the heels of another; a month will change every hope and plan. Now again, it loiters, and life stands still in the same spot, languid as death. For four years from that day when they saw each other in New Bond Street, the lives of Orlando and of Elizabeth moved thus at a slackened rate. The slow advance of change came like the

growth of moss, not to be traced in its coming. Elizabeth had been away from England ever since the spring succeeding the French war. From Brighton she had gone with her father to the Isle of Wight. There, as Orlando heard, she had been ill, and in the beginning of May, her father and she had been taken on a yachting cruise by an old friend of Major Glendinning's, who had recently married a young wife. Then, as the autumn drew on, they had settled once more at Nice, and had been living, ever since, at a little villa on the slope below Cimiès. Major Glendinning's health, he heard, was breaking much, and Millie and Gilbert were sure that his daughter would never consent to marry and leave him. But her engagement still held. Captain Grove, too, was abroad, flying, like a stormy petrel, to whatever quarter of the world was fullest of perturbation. He had been found to have apti-

tudes for the post of foreign correspondent. Men fell easily into companionship with him. He understood very clearly all the lower meanings and tendencies of events, and he had a gift of sharp writing which was the more valuable for being unaccompanied by corresponding sharpness of speech. Nor had he any inconvenient store of scruples; he well understood how to make a whole lie out of a half-truth, and to suggest, by an adjective, an ugly explanation of a fact. He had written a book of eastern travels too, wherein he had contrived to pay off old scores against several holders of high military office in England. By these means his name had come, once more, to have a certain currency, and he was able still to flatter himself with the belief that he pulled at the wires of the world's puppet-show. But in the ears of such men as Gilbert and Orlando, his name had ceased to ring with any sterling tone,

and it was very clearly felt that he had fallen, and was falling still.

Orlando's own life was working itself out into wider and wider activity. At Sherborne-by-the-Sea, his schemes were thriving; desolation was giving way to a gradual wave of prosperity. A railway was now being planned, and Orlando was among the most energetic of its directors. He had, himself, with considerable foresight, bought the line of necessary land about a year before—land of little intrinsic value, running in most parts nearly parallel to the flat high-road between Ipswich and Sherborne. In his own home, too, his voice had come to be heard with attention. It was uplifted generally in the cause of reform, and it was attributed mainly to his efforts that the country had neutralized itself at the last election by returning a liberal as well as a conservative member. His liberalism, though it was very ardent

in spirit, was restrained in manifestation by many tendernesses of sentiment ; it was the liberalism of a man to whose nature even an abuse had a certain beauty from being old-established, and to whom it seemed that progress, to be stable, must be slow of growth, like the oaks of his own home. Thus it happened that even the most conservative among his neighbours bore him no abiding grudge, justly remembering that he was but young, and that, if the opportunity were left to him of connecting himself by marriage with the wiser party, he too might become wise. Of this opportunity, however, he failed to avail himself ; there was no woman in Sherborne whose image could efface Elizabeth's. His father sighed, sometimes, within himself, when he saw the figure of the young man moving solitary among the old trees. To him it was significant that Orlando had learned to avoid London as much as he once sought

it. Father and son had never spoken to each other, a second time, on the subject of Elizabeth, but often their eyes met, and each knew what was in the thoughts of the other. And if not joy, tranquillity, at least, had come back to Orlando's heart. The world was full of interests for him, and while his father lived, he felt no solitude of soul.

But in the winter of the fifth year from Millie's marriage, there came a day when Orlando sat, alone, looking at his father's empty chair, and knowing that his path henceforward must be companionless. It was the second and the greatest sorrow of his life; but it was not, like that earlier loss, an influence which changed the whole direction of his life. This was loss; the other was loss and disruption, too. His course received no outward shock; he followed the same ends, worked at the same works, and was in effect the same

man, rendered only by grief, a little graver, a little stiller, a little less capable of smiles. The solitude of single life, which may be twenty years in overtaking a man endowed with many relatives, had come upon Orlando early. Millie's life belonged to a different world from his; Millie's children were but infants. Even Rosa no longer spent her Christmases at Sherborne, but was with Millie in London. Happily for himself, he was busy with many plans that brought him into contact with his neighbours, and gave him occupation for thought and leisure. He was planning, just now, for instance, the proper draining of certain marshy pasture lands, which had hitherto lain under water for two or three months in every year. Among these labours, came a letter to him from Millie, begging him, 'for a very particular reason,' to come and see her. Millie and Gilbert were, at this time, living in that house in Portland Place

which had been Lady Ellen's. This, again, had been, at first, a pain to Orlando. The trees were at their greenest, and the first beauty of summer made the world young. June was for once deserving its two epithets of breezy and leafy at the same time. Orlando, as he drew near the house, observed his sister watching for him from that balcony where Elizabeth had been startled, on the night of her aunt's death, by the first news of war. She met him as he came in, led him eagerly upstairs, and shut him into her favourite little sitting-room.

"My dear Orlando, I have a piece of news for you. Somebody you know is engaged."

"Not Charlie—yet, I should think," said Orlando.

"No, not Charlie, yet," said that young gentleman's mother. "Mr. O'Brien. Now guess who to."

"Oh, that's not difficult," he answered, turning away. "To Miss Glendinning, I suppose." Then, with a great effort, "You need hardly have brought me up, I think, for the sake of telling me that."

"My *dear* Orlando!" exclaimed Millie, almost with indignation. "Why, that was long ago; before I was married. That is all over, ages ago. Besides, you know very well that Elizabeth will never give up that wretched Captain Grove. No, but Rosa."

"Rosa!" said Orlando, turning quickly round to face his sister, and speaking in a voice of complete amazement.

"Well, why not?" she asked, smiling.

"Oh no; why not, indeed? Only I had never dreamed of such a thing."

"Are you—displeased at it?" said she.

"No, no. I think, as far as I can think yet, that it is a very good thing for Rosa."

"I did think, once," said Millie, looking

down, "that you and Rosa might some day have married."

"No, Millie, no; that could never have been. I am very fond of Rosa, as I might have been of a little sister of my own, but that could never have been."

"Then you are not at all disappointed?" said she, lifting up her eyes, rather curiously, to his.

"Not one atom."

Millie, after a little interval of silence, asked again, "Do you never mean to marry, Orlando?"

"When I find the right woman—if she'll have me," he answered, and turned their conversation back to Rosa.

By-and-by Rosa herself came in, blushing to the temples and hanging back a little; made shamefaced by the memory of thoughts to which she trusted that Orlando had no clue. And, indeed, nothing was more remote from his thoughts than the

idea that he could ever have been the central idol of a young girl's dreams.

Later in the afternoon, Lawrence too appeared. To Orlando's eye, there was scarcely any outward change in him. The bright, sudden smile, the flash of eyes and teeth, the frank, confiding tone and irresistibly persuasive accent, carried him back to the days when they had met in this room before, and when he had almost hated Lawrence. He, himself, felt ten years older than the Orlando of those days; the whole aspect of the world was different, graver, deeper, more strenuous than then. Yet this young Irishman, who had gone through the same experience and the same sorrow, had emerged, unsaddened, able to feel a new love, and to shape his hopes to a new course of life. And his love was real. His eyes hung upon Rosa; his speech turned itself to her: not the dullest observer could have failed to understand that he loved her.

Orlando was sitting, the next morning, glancing at a newspaper, and haunted, in spite of himself, by the memories belonging to the room. Rosa was moving to and fro, busy among Millie's flowers. Presently came from her lips the name in Orlando's thoughts.

"You remember Miss Glendinning, Orlando?"

"Yes, Rosie, I remember Miss Glendinning."

"You know," said Rosa, pausing and turning towards him, but still looking down among the flowers, "it was through her that this first came to be."

'This' was, of course, her engagement —the one event of her world.

"Ah!" said Orlando, in the lowest of undertones.

"I had always liked her, you know, at Sherborne; and when they were talking of her, one day, here, I said how I had half

worshipped her—as one does some people, you know—and how dear she was in all her ways. And that was the first thing that made Lawrence take any notice of me."

Orlando sat, looking up, attentive.

She soon continued. "Long ago, he had felt about her, just the same. And you can't forget those things altogether—I mean, the person is always different."

She coloured, and stammered a little.

"Yes, always different," Orlando assented.

"So, after that, he began to like me. And I used to like him to talk about her, and how she used to be. But I didn't think anything, you know. I don't think either of us had any idea. Only, so it came. And I thought, perhaps, if you knew him then, you might wonder, and you might not understand. Because, Orlando, though he did love her first, it is not true that the first love is always best.

He says so. He says that I am more to him now than she ever was, and that love that is only on one side never can be quite the same."

She had drawn nearer, and stood, facing her cousin, defying him, as it were, to doubt her lover's affection.

"Is it so, Rosie?" said Orlando, with a sigh. "Perhaps it may be. I am not learned in these things. But I do know one thing, and that is that he loves *you* now."

"Oh, I am glad to hear you say that," she answered, smiling and delighted. "The other is all over—quite. I quite understand all about it."

"I am glad that he should have told you; it is much better."

"Do you suppose," she said, rather loftily, "that there could be anything hidden between us?"

She shook her curls and turned back, smiling, to her flowers.

Orlando glanced down once more at the newspaper on his knee. A longing rose in his heart, checked by a dread of self-betrayal.

"By-the-by, where is Miss Glendinning?" he asked at last, keeping his eyes upon the column.

"At Nice still," said Rosa. "They stay there always; Major Glendinning likes no other place."

"She is not married, then?"

"No, I don't think so. Her father has been so ill. Some friends of Lawrence's who met her there in the winter say that they believe she is to be married this summer."

"And leave her father?"

"Oh no; I don't think that. Captain Grove would live there too, I suppose. I believe he is generally there, or else at Monaco."

"I thought he did foreign correspondence for some paper?"

"Oh no, not now. Lawrence says he quarrelled with the *Oppositionist*. I don't think he does anything."

"And lives at Monaco?" thought Orlando. He sat looking down at the newspaper, seeing not a word.

Presently Rosa passed out of the room.

He stood up and clasped his hands before his eyes. "To be married this summer—to that man! Surely, surely it would have been better if she could have loved me!"

Unconsciously, the ground of his sorrow was slowly shifting; grief and sympathy for her were taking the place of acute personal regret.

Rosa came, singing, along the balcony from the window of the next room. He went forward to meet her, calling up a smile.

"Millie wants to know what are your plans for the day," said she.

"I have to make a call in Gower Street upon an artist friend of mine, who has just come home from Rome with his young wife. Except for that, my day is at your and her disposal. Is Millie there?"

He, too, came out upon the balcony, and stepped into the other room.

Millie and Rosa agreed, when he had gone out, that he was looking particularly well, and seemed more cheerful.

The artist whom he was going to visit was, of course, Duncannon—Duncannon, comparatively prosperous, and the happy husband of Julia Cash. They had been home from Rome, about a fortnight, and were staying for the present in Gower Street, with Mrs. Cash. Orlando felt, as he walked thither, that all his friends were marrying, and that, as years went on, he should be left the only solitary man.

Changes had come upon this household, too, since the days when Duncannon had

first brought him thither. Silvia had been married, and was now a widow, living, with her two little children, under her mother's roof. Cecily was still Miss Cash; and Viola, it must be supposed, had by this time lost her right to be called 'little Viola.'

The door was opened to him by the same middle-aged servant who had always opened it to him before. From the dining-room, into which he had generally been ushered, came the monotonous, repeated sounds of piano-tuning. She led him a little farther along the passage, and admitted him to a room that looked out on greenness. Fresh air from a garden came in through the open window, and in a tall flower-pot stood a little palm tree. At a table by the window was seated a young girl with books and papers before her, writing. At the moment when the door was opened, her face was lifted up, as if she

were seeking in her memory for a word, and the hand that held the pen had just dipped it, with a motion like the stooping to drink of a bird, into the inkstand.

Orlando's mind was carried back, at once, to the melancholy day when he had seen a little girl with a strapful of books emerge from this house, and he knew that this must be Viola. Her childish face had developed rather than changed. She had not the pensive charm of her sister Silvia, but she was fresh, graceful, and full of life; bright-haired, clear-eyed, tall, and straight as a lance. In seeing her, you received not so much the impression of her face as of her look—the candid, intelligent gaze which could have belonged neither to falsehood nor to folly.

"Mr. Sherborne, miss. Do you know whether Mr. Duncannon is in?" said the servant.

"No, he is not, but he soon will be,"

she answered, rising, with a frank, pleasant smile. "Please sit down, Mr. Sherborne. Anne, will you tell mamma that Mr. Sherborne is here?" Then, turning again to Orlando, "I must introduce myself."

"Indeed, it is quite unnecessary," said he. "I think, if I had met you, anywhere else, I should have known that you must be Mrs. Markwick's and Miss Cash's sister."

She smiled again, and said, "I am glad to meet you at last. Harry has gone to the Flaxman gallery, but as that closes at four, it cannot be long, at the longest, before he comes in."

"Is he intending to stay in London now?"

"Yes; Julia and Silvia have gone up this afternoon to Haverstock Hill, to look at a house."

Mrs. Cash came in.

"Mr. Sherborne," said she, "Harry will

be delighted to find you here when he comes in. I don't think he knew that you were in London."

Her kindly tone was in itself an assurance of welcome; her clear eyes noted at once the mourning of his dress, and the friendly clasp of her hand was full of sympathy.

"I came up, yesterday," said Orlando, and I am going back on Monday; but I hoped I might be able just to catch him for half an hour."

"He was asking about you, the other day, but it was so long since we had seen you that we could not tell him much."

"My work lies mostly out of London, you see," said Orlando.

"Yes, of course. We hear every now and then of your labours at Sherborne-by-the-Sea. I suppose my grandchildren will live to see your statue erected there, in

the days when it has become a second Brighton."

"Mr. Sherborne thinks of George IV. on the Steine, and is not quite sure whether he desires the honour," said Viola.

Orlando laughed, and confessed that the royal founder of Brighton had indeed been in his thoughts.

"These are the drawbacks of celebrity," said Mrs. Cash. "I often wonder whether many sensitive persons are turned away from the paths of ambition by the portraits in the illustrated papers."

"That would make a suitable question for the mock debating club that Cecily talks of," said Viola. "*Has the influence of portraits in illustrated papers tended, on the whole, to stimulate, or to check, the ambition of celebrity?*"

"And when some conclusion had been come to on that point," suggested Orlando, "you might open the further inquiry

whether the result was more advantageous or disadvantageous to the world."

"Only I thought," said Mrs. Cash, "that it was of the essence of debating societies that they never did come to any conclusion."

Viola looked up and laughed, as if her observations rather coincided.

"Is that true of German discussions too, then?" asked her mother. For Viola had lately come home from a two years' stay abroad.

"Of ours, at least. We never, I think, convinced anybody but ourselves. And it really is strange to see how much one's own argument strengthens one's own opinion."

"Yes, I remember observing that, at college," said Orlando.

"And you may notice the same thing in parliament," added Mrs. Cash. "How many votes do you suppose are the results of any speech?"

"Must we think, then," said Orlando, "that argument has no power of leverage at all? That would be a melancholy conclusion."

"Not of immediate leverage, perhaps—here in England, at least—but rather a vegetable force that pushes its way up when it has lain long enough germinating. If argument seldom drives a man from his already occupied position, it very often may, and does, affect the line of his next advance."

"Let us, therefore," said Orlando, smiling, "continue to argue, and comfort ourselves with believing that our unconvinced hearers are carrying away the germs of conviction in their minds, in spite of themselves."

"It would indeed be a comforting belief," said Viola. "Only it would not do to preach it, would it? or your listeners might keep watch and pull up the first

sprouts. Hark! surely I hear Harry coming in."

She went quickly into the passage, and brought back Duncannon and Cecily.

"Talk of the sun——" said Duncannon. "I have been inquiring whether anybody could tell me anything of you. I would have cut short my Saturday's Flaxman-worship if I had known you were here."

"I feel honoured. So you have actually been in Rome, and have succeeded in tearing yourself away to come home again."

"It is so. 'Like him that travels, I return again.' You don't properly appreciate the pleasure of travelling, unless you put in an interval of staying at home. Is Julia back yet, Viola?"

"Not yet."

"That's a pity. We have had a fine time, Sherborne. I have never done such good work as this last year—never."

"Have you any of it accessible? I should very much like to see it."

"Oh yes. Where's that portfolio of mine? The canvases are packed away."

"I'll find it," said Viola, and went lightly away.

"It is a sad thing," said Cecily, "to observe how much more helpless even than he is by nature, a man becomes when he marries."

"The inferior nature always does, you know, Cecy, when it is associated to a superior one," her brother-in-law answered, with a serious air of mock-humility.

Then Viola, dragging in a large portfolio, rested it on a chair and opened it.

Duncannon and Orlando drew near. Mrs. Cash and Cecily presently followed, curious to know which drawings were most approved. Orlando, interested as he was in the sketches, had yet enough attention free to remark the pleasant group formed

by the mother and the two daughters, and to note the quick interchange of look and smile among them, indicative of so full an understanding that words were hardly required. Cecily's arm was linked through Viola's, and the nearness of their faces, leaning together as they looked, emphasized the likeness and the unlikeness of the two. They reminded Orlando oddly of a russet and a pale-cheeked apple. Cecily had a certain abruptness of speech and thought, a shrewd and quaint bluntness that betrayed itself in her appearance. The dress of the sisters differed very little, yet Cecily's had something uncompromising, something a little defiant and obtrusively reasonable, which in Viola's was absent. Her bright, hearty smile was as frank as Viola's, but not, perhaps, quite as sweet, and her voice, when she was moved, could ring hard. It seemed to Orlando that it would have been more

natural if it had been Cecily who had just come home from Germany, and also that there were points in which she appeared like the younger sister of the two. As for Viola, she was a surprise to him from which he could not easily recover. He had never chanced to see her again, since that day when her unconscious, childish smile had deepened the arrows at his heart, and he had thought of her always as preserving something of the child; as being distinctly the youngest of the sisters, with the vivacity and the dependence of youth. Instead of that, here was a serene and clear-eyed young woman, intelligent and self reliant, very evidently able, girl as she was, to discern her own path of life and walk in it, firmly, without any need of support. He could not help thinking, as he walked homeward, that something which now, in Millie and Rosa, was a little wanting might perhaps have been developed by the atmo-

sphere in which these girls had learned to breathe. Then he remembered his own ignorant condemnation of a woman who could lecture, and blushed a little for the arrogance of his youth.

The next morning, being Sunday, he accompanied Millie, Gilbert, and Rosa to the fashionable place of worship which they habitually attended. It was a chapel painfully ugly to the eyes of a man accustomed to look up, Sunday after Sunday, through arches of veritable early Gothic. The congregation, however, was of a very different calibre from that of Sherborne. Orlando noted, as the slow streams poured in, face after face full of thought and intelligence—keen eyes, deeply lined brows, and well-set mouths. This was not exactly the fashionable congregation for which he had looked. The simple service was conducted solely by one elderly and earnest-voiced man ; and the singing was imperfect

enough to jar very much on Orlando's ears. But the sermon seemed to be spoken out of his own soul. This was no longer the second-hand formalism of a Sunday's sermon, clothed in a scriptural diction quite apart from daily life and speech, but the true and living utterance of one man's deepest thought and faith; individual, full perhaps of idiosyncrasies, not acceptable by all, but honest, genuine, and fervent, and eloquent in speech through very lucidity of thought. To Orlando, it was a draught of deep refreshment, strengthening and invigorating; a distinct epoch in the gradual growth of his own system of thought. On the steps of the church, in coming out, he met Mrs. Cash, Silvia, Cecily, and Viola.

"What a magnificent sermon!" said he, full of his own delight in it, and feeling sure of sympathy.

"I saw that you were enjoying it," said

Mrs. Cash. "We were sitting almost above you, in the gallery."

"Does he always preach like that?" asked Orlando.

"Who can answer such a question?" said she, smiling.

"Oh no, not always," said Cecily.

"But always something worth thinking about, and never anything ignoble," said her mother.

Then they parted, and Mrs. Cash, as she walked with her daughters towards Gower Street, said, "I like that young man, Silvie; I always did." And she sighed, thinking of the little, dark-haired son who might have been of about Orlando's age now, if he had lived.

Orlando, too, spoke of his friends as he walked home; but Millie's carefully veiled questions could not bring to light a decided preference for any one of the sisters, and the suspicion which had arisen in her mind began to subside again.

The next morning took him back to his ordinary course of life at Sherborne. The little worlds, that had touched each other for a day, divided again, and wandered each on its own orbit as before.

CHAPTER IX.

NEW-YEAR'S DAY AT CIMIÈS.

"Nothing is more deeply punished than the neglect of those affinities by which alone society should be formed." —*Emerson.*

ANOTHER interval had gone by of six months' length. It was the first day of a new year. At Nice, the sky was bluer than in an English June, and the oranges, just ready for gathering, hung by hundreds on the boughs. Elizabeth had gone out from the little Villa Nalli, which had been for four years her home, and had left word that if Captain Grove should call, he might be told she was going up to the Roman amphitheatre. She walked that way, slowly thinking of many things as she walked—

of many things, but of none joyful. It was a fine day, cloudless, almost as a matter of course, and her path up the hill was edged with greenness and with flowers. The old circus lay solitary under the blue sky; from the sea came up a light, cool breeze laden with the perfume of the violets that now were sweetening every nook and cranny of wall. Elizabeth went forward slowly, and leaving the road, walked round the outer encircling wall. All its interstices were full of green life. A few grey olive trees, wrinkled as with extreme old age, and showing darkened fruit between their leaves, seemed harmonious to the place enough—metamorphosed ancients guarding their old haunts. She sat down upon a broken step, where, eighteen hundred years before, spectators had sat to witness many a martyrdom. The fashions of martyrdom change; our modern agonies are for the most part slow.

To-day it was Elizabeth's turn to look up to the pitilessly blue sky and wonder when her pain would be at an end, and peace would come. Here was another year; her youth was passing from her; her beauty, she told herself, diminished day by day; her once healthy strength dwindled; even this much-vaunted, exhilarating climate could not drive off her constant langour of body and depression of soul. She had no disease that could be diagnosed, no more than the plant has when, moved to a new soil, it dies. It was merely that the conditions in which she could have flourished healthily were wanting, and her life drooped.

Her eyes wandered over the amphitheatre, and her mind went back to those other Roman relics at Sellingham. Again rose before her the inscrutable face of the Juno with its arrested smile, half mocking and half sad, and the Juno seemed to her

like an impersonated irony of Fate. How near she had been to happiness, if she had but understood, that day! Her memory lingered, with a strangely blending pity for herself and him, upon Orlando. Him she might have made happy, to the fulfilment of her own life too. For Edward she seemed to have been but a downward influence. The thought of her seemed to have acted as the impelling motive of his every falling step. To-day, on the threshold of a new year, she resolved to make one last attempt to set their relation right, or else to break apart from it for ever.

Slowly, walking with a tread less firm than it used to be, Captain Grove came up the hilly road. Elizabeth had ascended again to the wall of the amphitheatre, and saw him approaching. Why should the day of her first promise come up before her so vividly? The background of

English trees closed in across the blues of sky and sea; the dead feelings of the past rose up like pale ghosts from a world as remote from her to-day as that old world was, among the ruins of which she sat.

"The same man," says the Greek proverb, "washes not twice in the same stream." Nor do the same two human souls meet a second time, unaltered. This mystery of growth within identity is the groundwork of all human hopes and fears, for individuals as for masses; and in the meanwhile, is the groundwork also of a prison-house for half the finer souls of the world. The bondage of the soul within the body is not harder than the bondage, through the belief of others, to a self which is no longer ours. The nature outgrows its garments, but those who remember the lesser days expect always to see the lengthened arm return to the limits of its sleeve. We are bound, as Gulliver was, by

the myriad hair-lines of false belief which once were, perhaps, true enough: the position of Gulliver's hair was natural; the Lilliputians did but fix each thread where it lay. But motion is natural too, and when, following the law of nature, he tries to move, then, giant as he is, the agony of upwrenching from this multiform, petty bondage will be strong enough to hold him down.

Elizabeth felt herself thus fettered by the thoughts, deeds, and words of her past —things that had, indeed, bloomed once, but were now only husks, fallen away from the germ of a new growth. But now, she told herself, she would break free from bondage, even though the roots of her life should be left behind. She sat still, and suffered her lover to come up to her. Years and wanderings had left their mark upon him too. The line of his constant smile had grown to a furrow; his hair was

thinner than of old, and more distinctly black; his eyes wearier and sunken; about the whole man hung an indefinable air of deterioration. It was not in the economy of poverty that this change showed itself. Captain Grove had no more left off wearing the most expensive coats and gloves than he had left off travelling first-class and smoking the best cigars. Nor was it to be noted in any undue signs of age. The man's face was a little worn, his hand thinner and wrinkled, the throat sinews a little more distinctly marked within the immaculate shirt-collar; but these are changes which come also to the prosperous and upright. There was about him some alteration subtler than these, something which would have made an hotel-keeper receive him with distrust, and would have restrained the prudent from playing cards with him. The change, familiar to Elizabeth by slow process, struck her to-day as a

whole. If she was changed, surely he was changed yet more. Her promise had been given to a man in whom seemed no possibility of such a development as this.

"A happy new year to you," said he, and, as he said it, kissed her negligently. "I brought up a bouquet with me, but left it at the villa with Mrs. Bannacker, to be put in water."

"Thank you," said Elizabeth; and then, "Do you really wish me to have a happy year?"

"Of course I do."

His dulled eyes began to grow alert. What, he asked himself, was her meaning?

"Then," she said, turning her eyes upon him, "it must not be a year at all like the last, or the one before it, or the one before that."

"What do you mean, Lizzie?"

"I mean that I can't, I can't, go on as we have been doing. What is the use of

it? I am only a drag upon you, keeping you from the life that you like best—or, rather, not keeping you. I know well enough what you do when I don't see you——"

His eyes opened more intently; a look of alarmed question came into his face.

"You go to Monaco, and you play and make money, and spend it in supper-parties and wine, and mix yourself up with all the people who make a gambling place disreputable. Oh, I know. No, you need not be afraid. I am not going to urge you to be different. 'Can the leopard change his spots?' I have given up that idea long, long ago. Go, go your way, and leave me to mine."

She had spoken vehemently, but not with violence, in the tone rather of conviction than of passion.

"Oh, that's it, is it?" said Captain Grove. "You think I am not worth

keeping on—eh? Not so profitable an investment as I was six years ago?"

"Not a very profitable investment for me at any time," said she, coldly, but with a light in her eye and a slight proud raising of all the lines of her figure.

Captain Grove was silent. Such success as he had, at various times, won was mostly due to his faculty of opportune silence. Elizabeth found herself forced to look up.

"Well?" said she.

"Well? Do you expect me to say, 'I wish you good morning, my pretty maid, like the man in the rhyme, and lay myself open to the same retort? Or do you want to hear what is in my mind?"

"I want nothing," Elizabeth answered, rising to her feet, and feeling herself chilled by an unaccountable alarm, like that vague terror which comes sometimes to fill the stillness of a solitary noonday. "I suppose I wanted to know that you understood

and accepted. Then here we part. Good-bye."

He, still sitting on the amphitheatre wall, neither looked up, nor took her hand, nor answered. But suddenly, as she moved to go, he flung himself towards her, and reaching upwards, caught the hem of her mantle.

"No, we don't. Stop."

She stood still, consenting to listen, but implacable.

"Listen," said he.

She remained standing, waiting for his words, which were slow in coming.

"Look back to six years ago. Think of what I was then. You were very ready to say 'yes' to me—almost at the first word. What has changed me? You—you. Was it for my own sake that I wanted to be richer? No, but that I might provide more fitly for you. What made my uncle throw me aside? He told

me, in so many words, because I had committed the folly of engaging myself to a woman who had neither wealth nor influence. It *was* a folly—and it has been punished, heavily enough. But I loved you: you don't know what that means. I might have freed myself and had another chance, but I loved you. I'm not perfect. I have not your happy coldness of heart. I drink, you say, and play. Yes, but what is it that drives me to anything that will make me forget the present, if only for an hour? Oh, you are hard upon me, Elizabeth. You always, always were. Go—go. I have grown to be but a poor wretch, and you are beautiful enough still to get a place in the world's race. I ought to have known better than to think a woman's promise would hold when a man was down."

He released his hold of her dress and dropped his face away from her, upon his arms.

Elizabeth stood irresolute. She longed to be away, and yet she could not harden her heart to go.

Suddenly looking up, he said, "I shall fall lower—I shall sink. There will be nothing left for me. But remember this as long as you live: my ruin lies at your door. If I had never seen you, or if you had loved me as some women do, I might have been another man. You have been a curse to me, a temptation, from the beginning; and now, when you were my last support, you go."

Still Elizabeth was silent. She dreaded, with a sick dread, to slip back into that hopeless gulf from which she had vowed to herself to force her way; and yet, if she were now pitiless, she felt that an accusing shadow would never depart from her side. She could not go, and yet she could not speak. If only fate would intervene and end their meeting without another word!

The long moments lengthened. He had again dropped his face. Now, once more he suddenly looked up —to the wide blue this time, instead of to her—exclaiming with a low, inarticulate cry—

"I have played and lost. It is done."

"No, no," cried Elizabeth. "No, Edward."

And, breaking into violent tears, she sank down beside him on the wall and suffered him to catch her in his embrace, and heard him, through her sobbings, call her his angel and his salvation. Presently her tears were wept out, and she raised herself a little from him. Her passion had not reddened, but had blanched her face, and had left its mark as a storm that exhausts, not as one that refreshes. Her momentary self-abandonment had passed too; she could but look on to the future with a blank despair. It was no use to speak, no use to complain or to entreat.

He would remain what he had been, and the days to come would be like the days behind.

"Lizzie," said he, with the old suave accent returning, "it is the indecision that makes everything so wretched. Why not put away all hesitation, and marry me at once?"

"How could I?" she answered quickly, "with papa?"

"You were willing to leave him, four years ago."

"He was not so ill then. No, that is indeed impossible."

"You never mean to marry me, Elizabeth. You may as well say so at once."

She rose up from his side, growing tall above him.

"I don't know that I ever do," she answered. "I don't know. My life seems too hard for me. It is so tangled. I won't be bound. I will never promise

anything again. It is nonsense to talk of marrying. You know perfectly well that we cannot marry; we should not have enough to live upon. If you are tired of waiting for me, you are free."

He, too, rose, and stood facing her.

"But if I had money enough—if my uncle died—what then, Elizabeth? It is nonsense to play fast and loose like this. Would you marry me then?"

"I suppose I should—I suppose I should have to do," she answered slowly.

He turned from her with a muttered curse.

"And you wonder that I am glad to try and forget my life!" he exclaimed. "I have lost everything for you, and you say you 'suppose you would have to do.' What made you say 'yes' to me at the beginning?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Elizabeth. "If I could only have known! And now

I am bound, and if I break from you I shall always blame myself; and to go on like this is no use, but only a torment to us both. Let me go, Edward; you would be better without me."

"Lizzie, Lizzie, I should be ruined without you. If only you could love me a little more. If only you could put away that hard, cold pride that drives me wild, I could do anything, or be anything. Look at me as if it pleased you to see me, Lizzie. Try and make me happy, and I will do whatever you like."

"Ah, but *will* you? I have hoped so often and so often, and it has always been the same. I don't know that I can begin to hope again."

"You have no trust in me, Lizzie."

She only looked up. What was the use of saying to him, "Is that my fault?"

"Well," she said, drawing a weary sigh, "we are to begin again, then."

"In a new year," said Captain Grove. "Kiss me, Lizzie, and wish me a happy one."

"I do, most earnestly," she answered, as she lifted up her face; and he, for the moment, felt that she was indeed his angel, whom it would be easy to follow.

They went down together to the Villa Nalli, and spent the rest of their day together. Many acquaintances came to make new-year's visits. Captain Grove seemed to have called up his old self from the past, and Elizabeth could feel some slight echo of her remembered wonder at his never-failing adaptability of speech and tone. To herself came back a faint after-glow of happiness. Perhaps, after all, her life might come to be endurable. She must try; she must do more for Edward.

As they parted, she said to him, "Come up again, to-morrow."

He answered with a smile and nod, and

walked home, meditating how best to evade the appointment. Lizzie must understand that he could not be tied to the Villa Nalli. He could foresee the sort of hold she was desirous to take upon him. He would have to go, to-morrow—it would not do, after this morning's scene, to stay away altogether—but he would escape as soon as possible, and he would not endure to be questioned.

Elizabeth, however, awoke the next morning to find herself paying for that painful scene the price of an agonized neuralgic headache, and lay, unable to lift her head from the pillow, or to bear the sound of a footstep in the room.

Captain Grove, when he heard that this was so, felt like a schoolboy at an unexpected holiday. He betook himself to his favourite resorts, and spent an evening of enjoyment, all the sharper in its zest for yesterday's good resolutions.

CHAPTER X.

THE NEW YEAR AT SHERBORNE.

"For all Time's sickle hath gone over you,
You are Orlando still."

Dekker.

On that same New-Year's Day, Orlando was walking about the roads at Sherborne, between fields of frost-hardened snow. He had wandered up to the favourite place of his childhood, the ruined castle, built by vaguely traced ancestors of his own. Turning from that, he leaned a moment on the stile, and looked down upon the village and his own home. The top, only, of the tower showed over the snow-laden trees, answering to the gilded steeple-vane of the church. Between these two

points lay the whole story of his life. No alteration had come to them since he had looked at them from this place as a child. But to him they were changed, and were changing still, year by year, with the growth of his own life's story. The Orlando who stood looking at them to-day was no longer the Orlando whom Elizabeth Glendinning had known. A hundred little differences, light footsteps left by circumstance, divided the new self from the old. Outwardly, the change was written in the growth from youth to manhood. There was no trace remaining now of boyishness, and but little of what Lady Ellen Darling had called "Mr. Sherborne's graceful melancholy." The whole face and figure had strengthened; the shoulders were broader; more of energy and decision dwelt in eye and mouth; in every glance and motion was an indefinable air of proprietorship. A stranger, looking at him as he stood by

the stile, might have said safely, "A man accustomed to walk on his own land." And watching the softened lines of the mouth, and a quiet sorrow in the eyes, he might perhaps have hazarded the guess, "A man who has lost a young wife or a child." This saddening of face came now as his eyes passed from the first point to the second. The tower recalled, indeed, a memory of Elizabeth, but it came no longer with the sharp pain of a new renunciation, but with the soft regret which time sweetens. But the churchyard trees brought back a nearer and a deeper grief. Looking there he sighed, and felt his life left lonely.

In the same moment, came a rush, a rustle, a quick scattering of the light, dry snow, and a warm, soft touch nestling under his hand. Looking down with a quick smile, he met the inquisitively sympathetic eyes of a great black collie, half jealous of the thoughts that held his

master's gaze fixed upon the distance. Orlando drew his hand caressingly over the dog's head, and the two took their way down the hill together.

The few foot-passengers had each a smile and a new-year's greeting for Orlando. His popularity here in his native place was great, in spite of a much-deprecated weakness for sanitary reform. His richer neighbours liked him for the sake of his name and birth, and found something very pleasant in his unassuming manners. The poorer people, having, like most poor people, a fine appreciation of gentle breeding exercised towards themselves, found that they could even pardon an officious zeal in the matter of drainage, when it came in so simply friendly, and uncondescending a shape.

Rob, the dog, did not receive the good wishes of the Sherborne cottagers in a kindly spirit, but when Orlando paused,

stood by, holding his nose in the air, with an almost human expression of contempt for the low persons with whom it pleased his master to converse.

They passed, presently, under a fine old timber lych-gate, into the churchyard. Orlando, striding on with the step of a man accustomed to the place, came to a large, square, marble tomb and stood still. Many names were graven on it, his father's standing latest. Below was the space which his own should some day fill. The snowdrops were beginning to peep through the surrounding earth. Orlando looked down and sighed. His dog watched him with a mute perplexity. This grave was a subject which he had pondered often, but which passed his comprehension. He laid his head, with a faint whine, against his master's knee, and Orlando looked down, hardly less startled for the moment than if the plaint had been human. An old man, too, who

was sweeping the snow from the paths, supposed the action to be one of pure sympathy, and thought that 'the understandingness of them dogs' was wonderful.

Orlando, aroused by the dog's touch, proceeded on his homeward way. Presently, with a quick ring of hoofs on the hardened road, came a young man and a young woman riding towards him. These were Mr. and Mrs. Haverdike, new-comers in the county, who were building a great white house about a mile from Sherborne Lodge. Mr. Haverdike was the son of a fabulously wealthy railway contractor. The father, having raised himself from utter poverty, and having, as the intelligent untaught often have, an envious reverence for education as a kind of necromancy, had lavished on the son of his prosperity every possible educational advantage. The odd result was that young Haverdike at twenty was a devotee

of what he called 'calt-yure;' perceived mysterious beauties in ungainly art-productions; admired poetry in which many epithets went to a noun, and might have lectured very efficiently upon æsthetic house-decoration. He had married a young lady whose tastes were very similar to his own, and her energy in declaring them much greater. She was an ardent, open-eyed young creature, with theories of universal equality, and though her own grandfather was an earl, honestly thought the better of her husband for being a coal-heaver's grandson.

These two young people, halting on the hard-frozen Sherborne high-road, greeted Orlando with wishes for a happy new year, and almost in the same breath announced that they were going into their new house next week.

"Surely it is not finished," said Orlando.

"Oh no. We are only going into a

part. We are only going to use the upper rooms. We shall not think of really *furnishing* yet."

The tone seemed to declare that furnishing was a kind of solemn rite, not to be entered upon rashly.

"None of the wall-painting is done yet," said Mr. Haverdike. "I want to make the dining-room a real temple of art. We shall have to find some one capable of executing it in a truly artistic spirit. I want a really good man, you know—a cultivated artist, a man with a poetic soul. And I would rather have some one *new*. Mary and I are quite agreed. We should like to find out somebody and bring him forward—give him a free field, you see, for his energies."

He smiled pleasantly, in so guileless a manner, that Orlando could not find it in his heart to deride the ambition of art-patronship.

"Do you know anybody of that kind, Mr. Sherborne?" Mrs. Haverdike asked.

"I do know an artist," said Orlando, "who would delight in such work. Did you ever see anything of Duncannon's? He paints portraits, I believe, mostly; but I have some outline sketches of his, illustrating 'King Lear,' which I should be pleased to show you, if you like; and I know his taste lies more in an ideal direction."

"Oh, poor man! and is he obliged to paint portraits?" said Mrs. Haverdike, in a tone of deep pity. Do let us see some of his things, Albert. I should like, of all things, to employ somebody who was like that. And do you really think, Mr. Sherborne, that he has genius?"

She turned her eyes upon Orlando with all seriousness, as if genius were as easy of diagnosis as measles.

"I don't know that I am a very good

judge of genius," Orlando answered, smiling a little. "I think he is a very clever and original painter, and not so well known as he ought to be."

"Is he young?" asked Mr. Haverdike.

"About two or three and thirty, I should think. He married one of the Miss Cashes a year or two ago—a daughter of Mrs. Cash, whom you may have heard of."

"What, the Mrs. Cash who is president of the 'Women's Work Society'?"

"Yes, no doubt. I thought you would very likely know her name."

"Oh, I have met her several times. And I remember seeing her daughter; I suppose that would be Mrs. Duncannon. She sang very well."

"They would be pleasant people to have living near," said Mr. Haverdike. "Not that, of course, one would weigh such a thing as that in comparison with artistic power. Unfortunately, some artists are

very unsociable—almost, if one may say so, morose."

"Duncannon is certainly not morose," said Orlando. "And Mrs. Duncannon always seems to me a particularly pleasant and genial woman."

"Oh, and do you think," asked Mrs. Haverdike, her brown eyes growing larger and larger, "that she inspires him?—Albert, do you hear?"

But Mr. Haverdike's attention was drawn off by his horse, which decidedly objected to further delay.

"I must not keep you standing," said Orlando. "If you like to look in at any time—say this afternoon, if you will ride round that way as you come home—I shall be pleased to show you his sketches; and I have a little landscape of his, too, done years ago. Good-bye for the present."

"Good-bye, and thank you," was an-

swered back in *duetto*, and the sound of hoofs rang out on the hard road again.

Orlando, with his dog at his heels, walked on again, thinking of the pleasure to Duncannon if he should be asked to paint those walls, and of the pleasure to himself if Duncannon and Julia should come to stay here in Sherborne during the painting. Reaching home, the dog made at once for the rug in front of the library fire. Orlando found it a little less easy to settle down in his accustomed place. The first day of the new year is apt to bring, even to well-balanced minds, memories of the past and visions of the future. Orlando wandered through the chilly rooms of his lonely home, and mused rather sadly upon their emptiness. Lancelot's words ran in his mind—

'But now there never will be wife of mine.'

He was the last of his name; with him the direct line must die. Millie's boy would

probably be here after him. He was very fond of Millie's boy, but he could not help sighing at the thought. How, if his wife might have been sitting here by him to-day, and a dark-eyed boy of his own might have looked up at him from his knee? For a moment he smiled at the visionary presences, felt the room lightened by the companionship of a woman, and heard the murmuring voice of the child. Then returned blankness, the crackling and rustling of the burning logs, the slowly blinking eyes of the reposing dog, silence and solitude. He himself was not yet, after all, eight and twenty, but he felt, or thought he felt, already like an old man, bereft by time and death of natural domestic ties. To his honour be it said, he had never thought of marrying the first not unsuitable young woman for the mere sake of forming himself such ties; his love for Elizabeth had taught him too high an ideal of mar-

riage for that. He could live lonely, but he could not marry, except for love. And the woman he loved was abroad, married, or all as good as married, to Captain Grove. Looking up he sighed, and tried to turn his thoughts into other channels. The year gone by had had its more hopeful aspects too. For if in the one thing nearest to his heart he had failed, there were other things, in their kind very dear to him also, in which he had succeeded. Here in Sherborne, and in that other Sherborne, he had done much—built, restored, renewed, and regulated. The times had changed since his grandfather's failure. The tide of fashion, then so adverse, was now setting towards east-coast watering-places, and Orlando's enterprise of revival had proved successful in the teeth of unanimous prophecies of failure. That was something. He had put his whole soul into the work, affording, as Gilbert had once told him, a

fine example of hereditary energy in a specialized direction. Many a night did he sit studying, with more earnestness than he ever studied his classics at college, the relative prices and qualities of different building materials. He smiled at himself sometimes when he reflected upon his own development into a practical man, with a keen eye for bad carpentry. He did not often trouble himself with the question: to what end was all this labour? To see good work being done by his means, and bringing in a fair result of profit, presented itself to him as a satisfactory end. For money in itself he cared little, but he did care much for the increased scope of activity which money gave to him. By-and-by he would widen his range of work yet more, and come, perhaps, to represent his county. But of personal joy such plans brought little. If his father might have lived to see it, it would have been different. But now,

as he sat solitary, he could not help feeling that his life was, after all, an empty one, and that he did but live with the lesser half of his soul.

"But it is useless to think of that," he said aloud, so that Rob opened his blinking eyes and looked up inquiringly.

His resolution to think of other things was assisted by the arrival, half an hour or so later, of Mr. and Mrs. Haverdike, anxious to inspect Duncannon's drawings.

The little Welsh landscape was sent for from its place in the tower, and the outlines of 'King Lear'—more germane to the present case—were brought out and laid before them.

These they greatly admired. Mrs. Haverdike was sure that they evinced genius, especially in the face of Cordelia, which was, she considered, "so exactly one's ideal of Cordelia. The man who could imagine such a face as that must be a real artist."

Orlando smiled a little, for the face was merely a slightly beautified version of Silvia's; but he said nothing, having observed that art admirers seldom relish that doctrine of Sir Joshua Reynolds, which declares idealized imitation, rather than invention, to be the true root of art.

Husband and wife were going to London on the morrow, and hoped Mr. Sherborne would be so kind as to give them an introduction to Mr. Duncannon. This Orlando very willingly did, adding on his own behalf an invitation for Duncannon to spend a day or two at the Lodge, in case he desired to see the walls before undertaking the commission.

Within a few days came Duncannon's answer.

"My dear Sherborne,

"Thanks for your kind invitation, and for the truly glorious prospect which I

owe you. The thought of half an acre of wall space to cover in panels of life-sized figures is almost too good to be true. Won't I astonish your country neighbours when they come to dinner for the first time? And what jolly people the Haverdikes are! They seem to have thoroughly taken in the correct idea, that an artist is a kind of prophet, and that his manifestation must be received accordingly. Only I observe that they reserve the right of private judgment in the choice of the prophet.

"The girls, who are here to tea, are mocking my enthusiasm, as usual. Cecily says she pities Mr. Sherborne if I am to stay with him in my present state of mind; and Viola is enumerating the difficulties which I shall meet, and threatening to paint a companion picture to Hogarth's 'Enraged Musician.' Julia, with more dignity, requests to be remembered to Mr.

Sherborne, and adds in my ear, 'Tell him how very grateful I feel to him for this.' I reply that, as usual, her sentiments are mine, and that you will probably hear more of them from yours,

"H. DUNCANNON.

"P.S.—I see that I have forgotten to say that I will be with you to-morrow evening. Let me be quick and seal this up, before feminine eyes discover the omission."

Orlando read the letter with pleasure, glad to think of those bright, young-women's faces at his friend's hearth. He prepared to make Duncannon very welcome, and glancing up to the cherished Vandyke on the library wall, thought with pardonable pride of exhibiting it to so appreciative a spectator.

With the next evening Duncannon appeared, looking more prosperous and less decidedly artistic than in his younger

days; his hair, too, was a little thinner about the edges of the forehead, his cheeks a little fuller, and his shoulders rounder; but no change had come to the alert eye, quick laugh, and impetuous speech.

His glance went at once to the portrait of Orlando's grandfather, hanging over the dining-room mantelpiece. Thence it travelled to Rob, whose sagacious observation was busy upon him. Rob was not openly hostile to his master's visitors, knowing better the duties required of a well-bred dog in his own home, but an opinion lurked in the recesses of his mind that their presence might advantageously be dispensed with. He put up his nose and laid his head sideways against Orlando's knee, as who should say, "This man is private property. Trespassers will be prosecuted."

Orlando's hand came down automatically to answer the caress.

"The dog is as jealous as a woman," said Duncannon; and then remembering that the words were out of tune to his loyal allegiance, added—"as a foolish woman, I mean."

"No woman ever cared for me enough to be as jealous over me as Rob is," said Orlando.

Duncannon, who had a good memory, looked suddenly up from the dog's face to the master's.

A quick answer, spoken with an accompanying flush of colour, when they two were discussing the poems of Clough, years before, recurred, and now suggested a solution to a question which Orlando's friends were rather fond of putting.

There was a pause. Duncannon, afraid of betraying the thought in his mind, sought a new topic, and caught that which lay uppermost.

"Did you hear what the subject was to be for my wall-painting?"

"No, I did not happen to ask. A series of themes from Morris and Rossetti?"

"Better than that. Six panels from the 'Morte d'Arthur;' one for each season of the year, and a big one extra at each end."

"Well, I am surprised! I should as soon have expected the 'Pilgrim's Progress.' Was it Haverdike's choice or yours?"

"No; Mrs. Haverdike's. She thinks it so English."

Orlando, perhaps remembering the constant references of Malory and Caxton to 'the French book,' smiled.

"Are you to work from the old legends or from Tennyson?" he asked.

"A little of both, I fancy. I got a modernized version of the old book this morning, and read it coming down."

"Oh, I could have lent it you."

"Could you? But I can fancy it would be in your line. I had never met with it before. But I must study up now. I shall have to take counsel with the wise—meaning, chiefly, Julia—and decide upon my groups. I must get my designs, or some of them, at least, laid in before I come down here to set to work. I don't suppose, in any case, we shall come till about Easter, for I have two portraits to finish for the Academy. I see you have plenty of wood scenery round here, but not much hill, and no lake. However, I have got a heap of landscape studies that I never thought to use for half so enjoyable a purpose. I am longing for the morning, that I may go over and see my 'fresh fields and pastures new.'"

"And the newness, I believe, makes half the charm—now, doesn't it?"

"Well, partly, perhaps. I do like a

change of scene; but, then, I like to keep on the same actors, and I take it that's the better sort of fickleness. I don't think I could live as you do, Sherborne, always in one place."

"Oh, but I don't. I wander a good deal. I think nearly half my time gets spent on the railway between this and London, and between London and Suffolk."

"Yes; to think of your having turned builder, after all! It is the last thing I should have expected in those Welsh days."

"Or I," said Orlando.

"'Truly,'" began Duncannon, "'we know what we are——'"

"Do we?" interrogated Orlando.

"'But not what we may be,'" continued Duncannon, who had caught the trick of quotation from the Cashes, and developed it pretty considerably, on his own account, since.

He did not fail to note that parenthetic doubt, nor the change of mental position since the days when the world had seemed complex in his eyes and simple in Orlando's. He looked at his friend, sitting with a hand on his dog's head, then thought of the three laughing young women in his own home, the evening before, and wondered at the unlikely ways in which life fulfilled itself.

Duncannon returned, more than ever elated, from his next morning's visit. Everything had fulfilled his hopes. The size of the panels was most suitable, the lighting of the room from above was all that could be desired. The Haverdikes were delightful people. They had proposed that he and Julia should occupy the cottage which they had just vacated.

"Such a jolly little house, Sherborne, with a lawn at the side, and any amount of rose-bushes in front. I declare, I do think one

might bear to live permanently in such a place as that. By-the-by, have you seen Haverdike's pictures? He has a little Perugino — oh, perfect! There's some sense in people being wealthy, if they use their money in that way."

"Ah, by-the-by, come and look at my pictures while it is daylight," said Orlando. "Not that they are Peruginos, or anything like it."

They went into the so-called picture-gallery, where Elizabeth had danced and seen others dance, on her last evening in this house.

"Now, here I feel like a portrait-painter again," said Duncannon, as he walked from one work to another, scrutinizing and commenting.

Thence they passed to the library, where Duncannon stood for some time in silent contemplation before the Vandyke. Then,

glancing from the portrait to Orlando and back again, he remarked—

"That's a thing that Haverdike can't make out of all his old masters, any more than he can make his new house what this is."

"No," said Orlando; "but he can leave it to his descendants, when there are none of mine. He is the beginning, and I am the end—that's all. And, to tell the truth, he starts from the more honourable founder."

"You would not like any one else to say so, though," said Duncannon.

"I don't think I should care. I have left off feeling very filially towards the old Norman bandit at the top of the family tree. I don't mind owning," he added, with an upward smile at the portrait, "to a certain gratification in looking like this man, who was an honest man and a gentle-

man, if he did get himself killed fighting for unconstitutional principles."

For the first time, Duncannon heard, and rejoiced to hear, the old, boyish tone of voice.

"I am glad to see there's something left yet of the old leaven of Sir Charles Grandison. I was afraid you had become altogether modern and practical."

"And you," retorted Orlando, "are growing conservative in your prosperity. I shall live yet to hear you preaching the dangers of advance."

"You misunderstand my nature, sir. My opinions are completely simple and completely consistent, but I have what Viola calls a spirit of minority. I always see the good most clearly on that side which nobody is sticking up for. Just now, for instance, I am inclined to find virtues in your Norman ancestor, and to depreciate the gentleman in the breastplate."

Orlando could not but smile at the description, so exactly, if whimsically, true, and often afterwards found himself applying Viola's form of words to past or present instances.

END OF VOL. II.

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